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PREFACE

For a long time, most scholars of protest were skeptical that anything of interest went on inside people's heads. Grievances were always present, and so could not explain the rise and fall of social movements, which were determined by "objective" factors such as resources and political structures. Recently, an explosion of work from a cultural perspective, or demanding a cultural perspective, has yielded insights that cannot be ignored. Too often in this reassessment, though, scholars have reduced culture to a few variables to be added to models alongside more structural (read "objective") factors, without using this new viewpoint to rethink existing findings and theories. For example, are political opportunity structures objectively there, independent of people's interpretations and definitions of them, so that those interpretations can be either accurate or inaccurate? Is rationality a set process, from which culture occasionally causes people to deviate? Are resources independent of what people think about them, and how they decide to use them? Do social networks matter beyond the meanings and affective loyalties they represent?

Culture consists of discrete, measurable items, such as beliefs or rituals, but it is also a filter through which all action occurs. It should not be contrasted with structural factors, because it is fused with them. Cultural sensibilities and processes help define the most "objective" factors as well as subjective ones, but the continual presence of culture need not make it invisible. We can discern its various components and dimensions, isolate it analytically from the resources and political structures it helps to define, and see how it varies across social contexts. It is amenable to rigorous definition, observation, and argumentation.

A concern with mental life leads not only to culture but to individuals, with their complex biographies, personalities, and idiosyncracies. They matter enormously to protest, especially when they found new groups or make key strategic decisions. Sometimes they even protest on their own, outside of organized groups. Then there are the issues

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of innovation, creativity, and change, which are closely related to culture and biography. Individuals often initiate small changes, many of which become widespread, and it is through cultural learning that they spread. People learn from the interaction between their existing cultural or biographical equipment and new experiences—a preeminently mental process. In paying special attention to individuals and to change, we must also reconsider strategies, which existing paradigms usually reduce to a matter of structure rather than one of conscious choice. People decide what to do, and these decisions have important effects.

Culture is everywhere, but it is not everything. We can only see it clearly by contrasting it with biography, strategy, and resources. At the same time, we cannot understand those other dimensions of protest without defining culture crisply. If culture is defined too broadly, it will encroach on the territory properly left to these other factors. If we ignore culture, as many scholars have, these other variables are forced to do too much work, stretching beyond their natural limits. A critical application of culture should define its limits as well as its strengths.

This book is the latest product of my long-standing concern with culture and morality. When I was in college in the late 1970s, calling myself a marxist was a way to distance myself from conservative political tendencies under Ford and Carter and from the complacent student culture that dominated Harvard. It was a way to express moral outrage over the inequities, waste, and irrationality of American society. But political tendencies such as maoism and leninism and theoretical ones such as althusserian structuralism lacked much humanity. When I moved to Berkeley and Todd Gitlin encouraged me to read E. P. Thompson, John Berger, and Raymond Williams, and then Foucault and Bourdieu, it no longer seemed important to maintain the marxist label in order to be a democrat and humanist. As I discuss in chapter 16, the abstractions of marxism have their share of historical horrors to account for.

Culture and morality are important to me because they make life interesting and meaningful. Culture is unavoidable, but meaningful morality is often hard to come by. To make morality anything but personal choice, though, is a severe challenge for diverse modern societies. Many commentators despair of any shared moral imagination, but they are often reflecting their status as rootless academics, ready to move thousands of miles for a higher salary. Protest movements are a good place to look for collective moral visions, with the good and the bad they entail. In modern society, they are one of the few places where

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we can see people working out new moral, emotional, and cognitive sensibilities.

In my first book, *Nuclear Politics,* I tried to insert cultural meanings into the heart of a structural analysis of politics and state policymaking. In each of the three countries I studied—the United States, France, and Sweden—politicians had different rhetorical and ideological ammunition for going after each other, different cleavages that defined friend and foe. Yet I found similar bundles of arguments in public debates and bureaucratic policy reports in the three countries. I isolated three such "policy styles"—technological enthusiasm, a costbenefit style, and moralism—and I argued that the contrasting distributions of these styles (or of the men and women using them) within state structures led the three countries toward different policies after the oil crisis of 1973–74. I was also concerned to show that many of the legal and administrative "structures" often thought to constrain policy formation were as likely to result from policy decisions as to cause them. Yet the balance between artfulness (or agency) and political structure changed drastically during the 1970s, as structures hardened in place. I also had to conclude, with disappointment, that the antinuclear movements in all three countries had little effect on policy outcomes. At most they managed to delay decisions long enough for better information to appear and more rational policies to be laid out. That book discussed antinuclear movements only as one part of a broader story; thus some materials gathered for that project appear here.

In my second book, *The Animal Rights Crusade,* which I coauthored with Dorothy Nelkin, I wanted to pursue more fully the moral dimensions of protest. A movement in which the activists and the beneficiaries aren't even from the same species seemed a good case for examining the moral shocks needed to recruit strangers to a new movement, the strident tone often adopted by those who feel they occupy the moral high ground, and the polarization and mutual demonization that occur in controversies pitting divergent moral visions against each other. But we were reluctant, in a book about a single movement and written for a popular audience, to push our theorizing about morality too far. So, like the antinuclear movement, the animal rights movement appears frequently in *The Art of Moral Protest.*

This book had its share of backers and helpers. The NYU Department of Sociology, where I taught until recently, was a fertile site for thinking about social movements, and the Workshop on Politics, Power, and Protest provided written and verbal critiques of parts of my manuscript. Ed Amenta and Jeff Goodwin were especially good

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colleagues and commentators. Several students coauthored papers and articles on which several chapters are loosely based, and they and others read additional segments of the manuscript: Mary Bernstein, Nancy Cauthen, Cindy Gordon, Jane Poulsen, and Yvonne Zylan. Jillian Jacobs, Tamara Dumanovsky, and especially Bettina Edelstein did much of the research on consumer boycotts. Tamara Dumanovsky conducted the initial research on the Khmer Rouge. The department's research apprenticeship program provided a structure to polish much of the research, and I thank Gary Ford, Nari Choi, and especially Jordon Peugh for their assistance in checking quotes and citations. Many audiences have responded usefully to my ideas in embryonic form: the Politics and Culture Seminar at the Russell Sage Foundation; the Departments of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center, Harvard, the New School for Social Research, Rutgers, Princeton, and Yale; conference attendees from the American Sociological Association, the American Political Science Association, and the Society for Socioeconomics. Bob Alford, a generous friend and incisive critic who knows more about politics than almost anyone, wrote more than thirty singlespaced pages of comments on an early draft. With characteristic energy, Doug McAdam was willing to read two versions for the University of Chicago Press, with the result that the text is more of a dialogue between cultural and political-process perspectives than it once was. Several others also read early drafts, improving it in ways large and small: for this I thank William Gamson, Michael Moody, Kelly Moore, Francesca Polletta, and Sarah Rosenfield.

The NYU administration supported my research by providing a course off in the fall of 1991. Support for the research that went into individual chapters came from the MacArthur Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, and the National Science Foundation, Ethics and Values Studies, under grant DIR-8820241. I have cannibalized several of my own articles for materials, and for permission to do this I thank the University of California Press, JAI Press, and Sage Publications. They are cited where appropriate in the text.

Many others helped in large and small ways, and I thank Ralph Chipman, Lee Clarke, Stephen Cotgrove, Frank Dobbin, Renée Emunah, Barbara Epstein, Marty Gilens, Irwin Goffman, Kelli Henry, Albert Hirschman, Bob Holt, Robert Max Jackson, Kian-Woon Kwok, Joan Lambe, John Lofland, Valentine Moghadam, James Scaminaci, Neil Smelser, David Starr, Chuck Stephen, Ann Swidler, Evelyn Walters, Davida Weinberg, Harold Wilensky, and Stella Zambarloukos. Doug Mitchell of the University of Chicago Press, aware that man does

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not live by ideas alone, has provided marvelous sustenance for both body and soul. He is as great a companion as any. His colleagues Matt Howard, Salena Krug, and Billy have also been delightfully helpful. Nick Murray proved to be an excellent copy editor.

Most of all, I would like to thank Sarah Rosenfield, who has made my life complete in every way. As Adam knew, but it took Milton to articulate, she is very much a part of me.

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One—
The Art of Protest

Imagination is the chief instrument of the good . . . art is more moral than moralities. For the latter either are, or tend to become, consecrations of the status quo, reflections of custom, reënforcements of the established order. The moral prophets of humanity have always been poets even though they spoke in free verse or by parable. . . . Art has been the means of keeping alive the sense of purposes that outrun evidence and of meanings that transcend indurated habit.
—John Dewey, *Art as Experience*

There is a lamppost below my apartment on Bleecker Street that helps me gauge what political causes are popular at any given moment. On 1 May 1991, when I began writing this book, the following announcements covered the metal post:

> WOMEN'S LIBERATION: WHAT WENT WRONG? A Marxist-Leninist group promised to show how the lack of a class analysis had crippled the contemporary women's movement.
>
> CELEBRATION OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE WAR. While one group attacked one of the most successful movements of recent years, another was celebrating one of the least successful. On 8 May, Margot Kidder, Kurt Vonnegut, William Kunstler and others would denounce the recent war with Iraq at the Wetlands, a politically correct Manhattan club.
>
> NEEDLE EXCHANGE IS AIDS PREVENTION. SHARING NEEDLES SPREADS AIDS. It was unclear whether ACT UP (The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) was targeting drug users or city needle policies with this sign.
>
> WOULD YOU KILL FOR AN EDUCATION? This clever but unsigned poster was opposed to military recruiters in high schools.
>
> ABORTION: EVERY WOMAN'S RIGHT. Announcing a pro-choice rally.

Three of the posters protested existing government policies, but two announced events designed to reflect on social movements themselves, showing how contemplative or ingrown such movements can become. The Iraq war poster was specific to 1991; the AIDS poster could have

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been posted any time since the early 1980s; the others could have appeared at any time in the past twenty-five years. The five posters touched on basic issues of human existence—war and peace, men and women, life and death—about which all of us hold passionate feelings and opinions. They are questions that touch our innermost sense of who we are and why we are, as well as our moral visions about how we should act in the world. Most of our institutions are silent about existential issues like these; protest is one of the few arenas where they are raised and examined.

Several of the posters targeted science and technology—the physical tools we have developed for manipulating the world and achieving our goals. These tools pervade and structure our lives as never before in history, and it is a rare individual who is not ambivalent about them, seeing both their power and their risks. We sense the unprecedented degree to which objective "hard facts" wielded by experts are used to hide or legitimate political and economic power in our society, as elites insist that they are bowing to inevitable forces rather than exercising their own discretion. Ironically, it is our unprecedented technical power over the physical world that heightens our moral dilemmas about how to use that power. The fact that we *can* makes us (or some of us) ask if we *should.* Modern science is also thought to have drained the magic and moral meaning out of the universe; protest is one way to recreate that meaning, to insist that life makes some sense. Corporations and governments create new technologies, products, and laws; protestors help us figure out what we feel and think about them. Moral and technological themes such as these cannot be avoided in public debate, as they are issues which have been defined in part by visible, angry, political movements.

American society is rife with loud, moral protest, and not just in Greenwich Village. In 1991 Operation Rescue flooded the streets of Wichita, Kansas with thousands of anti-abortionists who were willing to be arrested over and over again for blocking the entrances of abortion clinics; George Bush's Justice Department even supported their fight against the federal judge who ordered them not to harass staff and patients. On the west coast, hundreds of environmentalists spent the summer of 1990 camping in the woods north of San Francisco, attending pantheistic rituals, sitting in the sun, sharing philosophies, and chaining themselves to giant redwoods marked for timber. On the east coast in 1980, the Ploughshares Eight—primarily Catholic priests and nuns—broke into a General Electric facility in Pennsylvania, pounded upon two Minuteman missiles with small hammers, and poured their own bright red blood over the cold grey steel of the weap-

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ons, juxtaposing the messy frailty of human life with the massive technology of destruction. In front of the United Nations in New York, there is at least one protest almost every day of the year.

Moral protest spans not only state lines, but social class boundaries. Phyllis Schlafly mobilized thousands of lower-middle-class women, perhaps fearful for their own status as homemakers, perhaps outraged by the moral statement of equality and sameness it implied, to fight the Equal Rights Amendment. Thousands of groups have been formed around the United States, many by working-class housewives, to fight local environmental hazards like toxic waste dumps and incinerators or social disruptions like public housing projects and homes for AIDS patients. A college-educated, upper-middle-class population was the primary force behind the movements against nuclear energy and weapons. Even professionals such as lawyers, doctors, and engineers—among the elites of our society—are sometimes swept into large-scale movements expressing dismay, outrage, contempt, or even plain fear. And the very poor, society's true marginals, occasionally join together to protest, overcoming habitual (but learned) paralysis, despair, and cynicism.

Moral protest is no recent fad, no mere child of an affluent society. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the United States had Bacon's, Shays's, and the Whiskey rebellions. Almost every foreign war and intervention undertaken by the U.S. government has had vociferous critics who took to the streets; in the extremely unpopular War of 1812, for instance, Nantucket Islanders declared their neutrality, while a crowd in Newburyport, Massachusetts forcibly attempted to free British prisoners of war. Ten thousand protestors gathered in New York in 1849 to express their outrage over, of all things, the British nationality and aristocratic tone of a famous Shakespearean actor of the day; twenty-two were killed in the ensuing Astor Place riots. The roots of the trade union movement lie in nineteenth-century outrage over cuts in wages, deterioration of working conditions, and other abuses by employers—in fear and moral indignation, not in calculated efforts at personal gain. Throughout that century, moral reform movements fought against drinking, gambling, breaking the Sabbath, and "licentiousness;" today YMCAs sponsor swimming pools and aerobics classes, but when they were first founded in the 1840s their mission was to help young, single men avoid the temptations of sin. On Christmas day, 1908, the mayor of New York even closed all the city's movie arcades, which, moral reformers insisted, encouraged loose morals and taught new immigrants disrespect for law and order, by means of subversive players such as the Keystone Cops. Diverse movies, plays,

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books, paintings, and music are regularly condemned, and sometimes purged from stores and libraries, at the urging of groups concerned with creeping immorality.

Although most of this book deals with American moral protest, the United States is hardly unique in giving rise to such political fervor. Islamic fundamentalism, most memorable in Iran in 1978–79 but persistent throughout the Islamic world, has stood as a sweeping condemnation of European imperialism and its accompanying economic and technological institutions. Temperance crusades, for the past century, have been even more popular in Sweden than the United States. Later chapters examine boycotts in nineteenth-century Ireland and the revolution in Cambodia in the 1970s. There is no country in the world forever free from rebellions, religiously based protest, or secular movements to end one or another practice perceived as despicable. Protest is not omnipresent—indeed there is probably far less than there should be—but it is recurrent.

Why do our thoughts about the world lead us so often to want to change it? What moral visions inspire outrage about often-distant practices and institutions? There are, after all, many other ways to respond to what displeases us. We can change our residence to escape many of the ills we detest—relying on exit, rather than voice, as Albert Hirschman once put it. Or we can simply ignore what we dislike, as so many Americans do, concentrating on the pleasures of private life. Commentators complain of apathy, narcissism, and individualism in American society. Some have argued that we lack even a language for discussing the public good as opposed to personal needs and goals. Others have decried a new narcissistic personality type, obsessed with self-identity to the extent that events in the public sphere are reduced to their implications for the self. More sympathetic observers place greater weight on the institutional barriers to voting, party formation, critical perspectives, and social change. All attempt to explain America's supposed lack of political activity.

Such critics manage to ignore the swirl of political activity that nonetheless exists around them. Many Americans are anything but apathetic. Those who choose to engage in politics still face many options short of active protest. In the United States and many other countries (still, alas, a minority of them), citizens can vote for various political representatives. As individuals we contribute money and write letters to politicians. Yet many people feel obliged to step outside these "normal" channels. At that point, they may engage in protest.

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Individuals resist or protest what they dislike in many ways. They distance themselves from their organizational roles; they ignore rules they dislike; they criticize and complain; they sabotage their bosses' projects in various degrees; they pilfer supplies. Quiet resistance can grow more public, as when individuals write letters to their legislators or newspapers. Others speak out at public meetings; some send letter bombs. A striking form of individual protest is whistleblowing, an action we shall examine in chapter 6, when individuals make public the transgressions of their employers. There is protest, in other words, even when it is not part of an organized movement. Most scholars have defined this kind of action as outside their interest, preferring to examine full-fledged, coordinated movements. This choice renders invisible all the ways that individual acts of protest do or do not feed into more organized movements. Individual protestors, we shall see, have a variety of relationships to the formal groups most visible in protest movements.

Protestors frequently do organize themselves into groups, collections of which comprise social movements. Social movements are conscious, concerted, and relatively sustained efforts by organized groups of ordinary people (as opposed to, say, political parties, the military, or industrial trade groups) to change some aspect of their society by using extrainstitutional means. Some of these movements have positive agendas and try to build alternative ways of doing things, from communes to neighborhood groups to freedom schools. But most involve protest: explicit criticism of other people, organizations, and the things they believe or do. Rather than simply or directly changing what they dislike—which may not be possible—they also express their contempt and outrage over existing practices. [1]

It is their ability to provide a moral voice that makes protest activities so satisfying. They give us an opportunity to plumb our moral sensibilities and convictions, and to articulate and elaborate them. And it is important to articulate them publicly and collectively, two features which, sociologist Emile Durkheim insisted, deepen the significance and emotional impact of beliefs and feelings. Few other institutions in modern societies provide this kind of forum: schools rarely do; news media claim they're sticking to the facts; normal politics provides extremely constrained choices; even churches, synagogues, and mosques offer social gatherings more often than authentic moral tests.

Moral protest comes in different styles. The standard ones today include large public rallies and marches, occupations of symbolic or strategic sites, provocative verbal and visual rhetoric, and more mainstream lobbying and electioneering. But every group seeks creative

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variations on these basic tactics. Those opposed to homophobia have sponsored gay and lesbian "kiss-ins" in redneck bars and stamped "Gay Money" on dollar bills to remind us of gay and lesbian buying power. ACT UP holds "Latex Liberation Days," distributing condoms in New York City high schools. Animal rights activists have broken into research laboratories in the middle of the night to "liberate" the labs' "captives;" one group held a "Barf-In" in front of a cosmetics company to show that animal testing made them ill. Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman persuaded anti-war demonstrators to try to levitate the Pentagon by means of the incantations of witches (less plentiful in 1967 than they are today); they failed but attracted amused media coverage. A favorite target, the Pentagon has had its walls splashed with blood, its lawns planted with cardboard tombstones, and its doors woven shut with brightly colored yarn (interested in social and symbolic webs, a later generation of witches chants "We are the flow, we are the ebb/ We are the weavers, we are the web," when they weave over entrances). [2] During the 1968 United Farm Workers' strike, supporters in Toronto took "Don't Eat Grapes" balloons into supermarkets, handed them out to children, and let them float to the ceilings; to the chagrin of store managers who punctured them, the balloons were filled with bright confetti. Human blood, dead fish, live rabbits, effigies of CEOs, and Pinocchio false noses have all been props in protests at the headquarters of large corporations. Even direct mail appeals offer a chance for innovation. One environmental group sent out genuine checks for two cents to attract the attention of each supporter and encourage her to "put in your two cents' worth."

Beyond small innovations like these, moral protest has changed its basic forms over the centuries. Scholars of Western Europe have described the following sequence. From the medieval period until the nineteenth century, peasants either formed religious movements or responded to immediate threats such as grain scarcities and high bread prices, enclosures and other attempts to curtail their traditional rights, and other arbitrary actions by elites. As cities flourished in the early modern period, their residents also took direct action against those they felt were doing wrong, sacking the homes of tax collectors, seizing shipments of grain, or attacking religious minorities. Such actions were local and short-lived, directly targeting those perceived to have erred, and rather directly redressing the perceived wrongs. Around the time of the French Revolution, other forms of protest appeared—boycotts, mass petitions, and urban rebellions—with more general aims. Such tactics, taken up first by members of the bourgeoisie and soon by the

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emerging industrial working class, gave rise to what I shall call citizenship movements. These efforts were organized by and on behalf of categories of people excluded in some way from full human rights, political participation, or basic economic protections. They were movements demanding full inclusion for these collectivities, including industrial workers, women, and later racial and ethnic minorities. Increasingly national in scope and better organized in a sustained way than peasants had ever been, these movements were part of the expansion of industrial society, incorporating more and more of a society into capitalist labor markets and democratic polities. Because they were making demands of states that were growing more powerful and centralized, they too have tended to grow more formal and bureaucratized over time.

In addition to these pre-industrial and industrial forms of protest, a third kind of social movement—which I shall call post-citizenship—has flourished, composed of people already integrated into their society's political, economic, and educational systems. Because they need not demand basic rights for themselves, they often pursue protections or benefits for others, including on occasion the entire human species. In the nineteenth century, post-citizenship movements often took the form of poor relief or anti-vice crusades; in the last thirty years they have pursued "post-industrial" or "post-material" aims like protection of the environment, peace and disarmament, alternative healing, lifestyle protections, and animal rights—goals which do not especially interest those seeking jobs, equal pay, or the right to vote (none of which appeared on my lamppost). Ambivalence toward modern science and technology, occasionally even outright hostility, are common themes in the recent wave—the "post-industrial" branch of post-citizenship movements. These protestors are especially interested in changing their society's cultural sensibilities. Unlike citizenship movements, which often competed with each other because they had clearly defined constituencies, post-citizenship movements flow easily into each other: the environmental and feminist movements together inspired the antinuclear movement of the 1970s, which in turn gave rise to the disarmament movement of the early 1980s. Many European scholars dubbed these "new social movements" because they contrasted so strikingly with the class-based movements and political parties that had dominated European politics for one hundred years. I prefer the term *post-industrial* because these movements take for granted the complete penetration of industrial society, and seek ways to ameliorate it effects (but they remain a subcategory of post-citizenship movements).

Protest in the United States arrived at post-industrial movements

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through a trajectory different from Europe's. With plentiful land to be taken from the native Indians, early religious heretics could be expelled rather than burned (witches excepted). Without a traditional peasantry or seigniorial arrangements, there were few bread riots or protest against usurpation of local rights. Americans, many living on frontiers and on farms, were heavily armed, so that—as early as Bacon's Rebellion in 1676—protest regularly took the form of boycotts and armed rebellion against central authority, such as it was. In the nineteenth century, too, the United States was filled with post-citizenship movements concerned with drinking and other sins, health foods, the environment, spirituality, and other "lifestyle" issues sometimes pursued by today's post-industrial movements. Such movements are hardly new in the United States. The labor movement, meanwhile, also differed here. White male workers were granted suffrage early, so that the labor movement concentrated on economic power rather than voting rights. The result was, for complicated reasons, extremely severe repression and the lack of a permanent political party pursuing the interests of the working class. When post-industrial movements grew—here as in Europe—out of the revolutionary efforts of the 1960s, they did not seem so new. [3] They followed a long line of post-citizenship movements.

Even so, most American scholars have taken citizenship movements as their model, as though they had studied Europe's trajectory—as many of them did. Because most students of protest study just one movement, the peculiarities of that movement affect their theories. It is all too easy to overgeneralize from one case, taking as universal many phenomena that vary across movements. The southern civil rights movement, from roughly 1955 to 1965, has provided both intellectual grist and moral inspiration for several generations of American researchers. The labor movement, another classic citizenship movement, has also been heavily studied. As a result, theorists have been slow to recognize what is different about post-citizenship, and especially post-industrial, movements, much less come up with theories to explain why citizenship and post-citizenship movements might look and act differently. In many scholarly models, citizenship movements appear normal, while post-citizenship movements appear so abnormal that they are often not even defined as social movements.

The dividing line between citizenship and post-citizenship movements is not always sharp. Few groups are oppressed in every aspect of their political and economic lives—southern blacks before the 1960s being an exception. Movements for gay, lesbian, and women's rights have partly battled legal discrimination but also tried to rework cul-

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tural meanings and tolerance for diverse lifestyles, shading into the concerns of post-citizenship protest. Women, for instance, now have the vote and many other legal rights—they can hardly be called an "excluded" group—but they face disadvantages in private life due to cultural attitudes and lifestyles. Such movements are typically divided between organizations concerned with legal rights and those pursuing cultural change. [4]

Nor are these two the only types of protest movements. There are also "moral panics" over issues like drugs or rock music, nationalist movements aimed at immigrants, and outright armed revolutions, among other types. I use several examples of moral protest in this book, but the main ones are post-industrial movements, including the antinuclear, the animal rights, and the environmental movements. By contrasting these cases with a literature developed for citizenship movements, I can often see generalizations that are true for citizenship movements but not for others—and hopefully explain why. I should be able to see dynamics invisible to those with lenses created to focus on citizenship movements. By comparing different types of movements, and even different movements within the type, we can better see what varies across protest movements and thus avoid overgeneralizations.

Most academic theories of social movements are not prepared to explain the full range of protest goals and activities, especially those of privileged rather than oppressed citizens. Older theoretical approaches (those developed before the civil rights movement) dismissed moral protest as a crowd dynamic, a sort of irrational frenzy that erupts when people are thrown together in large numbers. The newer ones inspired by citizenship movements often err in the opposite way, seeing all protest as the narrowly rational pursuit of interests, similar in its intent to the more conventional political activities of bureaucratized interest groups. Some even analyze moral protest as the disguised pursuit of material self-interest rather than as an effort to realize a moral vision. Even recent attempts to examine the culture of social movements have mostly focused on cognitive beliefs, overlooking the emotions and moral visions that support them. I shall try to fill some gaps in these research traditions by offering additional concepts and language for understanding moral protest—concepts that highlight its cultural creativity, its serious moral purpose, and its vital contribution to modern societies.

Who are we humans, who protest so much? Most prominently, per-

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haps, we are symbol-making creatures, who spin webs of meaning around ourselves. We proliferate metaphors and language for describing the world; we elaborate theories, hypotheses, and predictions to satisfy our curiosity; we create symbols to probe deeper and further and to impress ourselves with their beauty; and we tell each other story after story. Into this roiling cognitive activity we mix emotions and moral evaluations, constructing heroes, villains, and comic jesters, anger, envy, admiration, and indignation. We add layer upon layer, creating thoughts about previous thoughts, attaching new moral values to existing ones, working out how to feel about our own feelings. We are aware of our awareness about our meanings—and so on, with infinite complexity. We are constantly learning, revising our views, adapting to new circumstances that we ourselves often create.

A theme throughout this book is what sociologists call cultural "constructionism:" the idea that we humans together create everything that we know and experience, or at least the interpretive frameworks through which we filter all our experience. We build equipment to generate data on which to ground scientific facts. Our institutions constantly promote certain moral beliefs and suppress others. Even most of our emotions are shaped by the understandings and responses of those around us. As the "postmodernists" insist, we have no universal, absolute Truth on which we can construct our beliefs, no firm grounding that we can always take for granted. We have only our own cultural traditions, and the traditions of others. These define our world. Protest too is constructed. No individual or group has goals or interests that are objectively given without any cultural interpretation. In interaction with others, we perceive what our interests (economic, moral, emotional, and other interests) are, and build political goals in accordance with them. We also decide what tactics are appropriate, even what organizational forms fit our moral visions.

This image of humans as communicators and symbol makers, trying to make sense of the world, implies that we often protest because our systems of meaning are at stake, because we have created villains, and villains must be attacked. As Carl Schmitt pointed out, politics is about the creation of friends and foes, two of the most simple, useful—and dangerous—categories for imposing order on the world. An important aspect of this construction of meaning is the creation of moral valuations, which then give us emotional energy for striving to transform our lives and societies. We need to allocate praise and, more importantly, blame. We trust certain groups, individuals, and institutions, and mistrust others. Cultural traditions provide tools and patterns for constructing meaningful lives. Like laws, political structures, or our bank

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accounts, they enable us to do certain things but prevent us from doing or thinking others. Even when we cannot articulate all our cultural meanings and rules, our actions implicitly depend upon them. We are so deeply embedded in cultural traditions that, even as we transform and attack them, we cannot escape them.

For transform them we do. We are *artful* in accepting, playing upon, bending, or rejecting cultural rules, much as Beethoven absorbed, embodied, and exploded the rules for string quartets. Culture is only one dimension of life that humans are capable of changing: we also invent new technologies, accumulate or redistribute money, change laws and political systems, even reconfigure individual feelings and loyalties. This artful creativity—sociologists refer to it as agency—is present in all social life, not just in protest. But since it is the *raison d'être* of protest movements, it is especially salient there. To understand artfulness, I'll argue, we need to pay attention to the biographical sources of individual variations, for these are the seedbed for innovations.

To understand why and how people organize themselves to protest against things they dislike, we need to know what they care about, how they see their place in the world, what language they use to describe entities such as technologies, corporations, and the state. Naming is a central activity of any movement, for attaching labels to activities and aspects of the world around us helps us change our minds, see new vistas, and rearrange our feelings about others. Some slogans result from endless discussions late into the night, as when Students for a Democratic Society adopted a goal of "participatory democracy." In other cases a slogan catches on first, forcing a group to develop a philosophy to back it up, as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee worked out the idea of "black power" as opposed to civil rights. [5] Others come from publications by philosophers and ideologists, such as the term *speciesism,* which animal liberationist Peter Singer coined to indicate that other species can be oppressed in the same way as certain categories of humans.[6]

When I speak of a group's sense of their place in the world, I mean that in more than a metaphorical sense. We develop routines around ourselves in physical settings, particularly in the place we conceive of as home. All familiar places, but especially our homes, have an emotional charge for us; they carry symbolic meanings which are rarely neutral. Sometimes the charge is negative, as the African-American inner-city neighborhood may connote danger and disorder to the middle-class whites who pass it on elevated freeways while commuting from the suburbs. More often the charge is positive, as it is for those who try to protect cherished neighborhoods by battling garbage

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dumps, hazardous waste sites, and other facilities. The clash between a good place and a bad threat may heighten the positive and negative affect associated with each. Much if not most protest is reactive, spurred by a sense of threat to one's daily life, including one's physical surroundings—a cultural and biographical dimension that is lost in models of protest as highly purposive, in pursuit of clear rights and forms of inclusion.

In addition to our strong sense of place, we are also caught up in flows of time. Not only do important historical events shape our sense of the world and ourselves, marking political generations in precise ways, but we also have different images of history itself. One dominant image, especially among the middle classes, has been that of a progressive unfolding, but there persists a strong, more pessimistic countercurrent too, one that sees limits or expects collapse. Such sensibilities about the flow of history shape people's sense of political possibilities. An optimistic vision of history as progress often supports faith in technological development and rapid political change, in order to bring about the superior and inevitable next stage. Most moderns—especially, again, the middle classes—also develop personal projects, images of a life cycle with attendant goals that unfold gradually and cumulatively over time. Certain stages of the life cycle are more conducive to political activity than others, yet some people weave political action into the fabric of their entire life tapestries.

Culture, which for now I'll define as shared mental worlds and their physical embodiments, does several things. It provides a collection of discrete beliefs, images, feelings, values, and categories, as well as bundles of these components. It also helps define or "constitute" all social action and the world as we see it. It gives us patterns of acting as well as thinking, judging, and feeling. And it offers many of the building blocks and dynamics of creativity. At the same time, culture isn't everything: it is not physical resources and the money to buy them, nor strategic interactions with other groups and individuals, nor the biographical idiosyncrasies of individuals. Culture helps define resources, strategies, and biographies, but it is not the same thing as they are. These are four autonomous dimensions of protest, each with its own distinct logic. Most traditions for studying protest, I'll argue, have collapsed one or more of these four basic dimensions into the others, sometimes even insisting that protest can be explained by just one dimension.

Our cognitive beliefs, emotional responses, and moral evaluations of the world—the three subcomponents of culture—are inseparable, and together these motivate, rationalize, and channel political action.

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Beliefs and feelings emerge from many sources: professional training as an engineer or an economist; hobbies such as gardening or medieval history; rearing one's child or caring for one's elderly parents; interpersonal dynamics that were thwarted or nurtured in childhood. Because everyone has a unique biography, different elements of the surrounding culture come to be embodied in the subjective worlds of individuals (through processes I'll label biographical). The ensemble of one's activities (past and present) makes certain feelings salient, certain beliefs plausible, certain moral principles more important than others. The diversity and sheer number of these sources make it hard to predict the goals and targets of moral protest. Even more, the targets often change during the course of the protest, as participants actively—and collectively—rethink and reframe their beliefs and passions. Social movements are less predictable and stable than many forms of social interaction which occur in formal, even rigid, organizations. They are, as a result, both hard to describe in universally applicable terms and yet an important source of innovation and creativity in modern society.

This view of social life as artful, in which people play on cultural meanings and strategic expectations in a variety of ways, allows us to see many benefits of moral protest [7].Rather than dismissing protestors as irrational kooks or selfish calculators, we can appreciate their creativity. Much like artists, they are at the cutting edge of society's understandings of itself as it changes. Moral protestors are often sensitive to moral dilemmas the rest of us ignore; they sometimes generate new ways of understanding the complexities of the human condition. Even when we disagree with their positions, they frequently force us to reconsider our own, to think up reasons and rationales, to decide if our intuitions are consonant with our basic values. They extend our moral languages. Such cogitation is an essential human activity. The news media are led to probe (if that is not too generous a word) new places, talk to new people, uncover new experiences. (None of which is to deny that the media and other social institutions at the same time deeply shape protest.) On occasion protestors even inspire practical or technical solutions to social problems, such as tests of new cosmetics that use computers rather than rabbits. In the face of social change, protestors are like the proverbial canaries in the mines, except that they sing out rather than quietly expire.

Protest movements help us articulate formless intuitions of which we are barely aware, bringing them into the light of day so that we can consider them and sometimes act upon them. Not only does this process of formulating our moral beliefs help us get clear about our political goals, but it feels good to make a public statement about what we

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believe. Protest is like religious ritual: it embodies our moral judgments, so that we can express allegiance to moral visions through our actions. For those who no longer hold to traditional religious practices, protest is one of the few ways to express moral viewpoints. For this reason, the protestor has become an important character type in modern societies.

At first, mine seems like a Romantic, ambitious vision of what protest movements can do, placing them at the center of our moral and intellectual life. I can be hopeful about these effects, though, because of pessimism about others. Total revolutions are not only rare but seem to turn out hellishly. Few protest movements attain even their stated goals, although progressive scholars often delude themselves about this. Nuclear energy was stalemated in the United States, but not by the efforts of the antinuclear movement. The huge peace mobilization of the early 1980s had no discernible influence on weapons policies. Even the civil rights movement, despite major legislative victories, has had disappointing long-term results. My view of protestors as primarily participants in public debates, interested in consciousness as much as policies, is a modest, even disillusioned, perspective.

But this more restricted view of protest allows for normative judgments of how protestors behave. When they undermine public understanding, misrepresenting their goals for instance in order to win, then they are playing this role badly. In the inevitable tension between instrumental success and contributions to public awareness, I favor the latter. This is a relatively arbitrary value call. I fear those who favor winning over honesty, for they can justify this preference only if they are certain that they possess the full truth. I doubt that anyone has the whole truth, but if they do, I want them to persuade me, not impose it on me.

A lens that focuses on culture and creativity may help us judge the goals of social movements as well as their methods. Some movements ignore or deny the value of cultural tradition: the way in which it connects people to their past, to future generations, to each other. Attention to creativity, in addition, may help us criticize movements that are too creative, denying their own cultural debts in an effort to remake society from scratch. Most of all, though, we can censure movements that aim at denying cultural voice and creativity to others, for this is a hideous form of oppression. The Nazis, the Khmer Rouge, and the Taliban of Afghanistan not only aimed at destroying certain cultures, but prevented many people from creating their own culture.

Part one reviews academic theories and conceptual building blocks

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for understanding protest. Chapter 2 examines the citizenship paradigms that have dominated research on protest during the twentieth century; chapter 3 is a broader discussion of the basic dimensions of protest; chapter 4 presents recent efforts to rediscover culture, partly by studying post-citizenship movements, especially in their post-industrial form. Part two probes the multiple impulses that lead individuals to protest, including positive moral utopias, religion, fears of the unknown, threats to established routines, hatred of other social groups, professional ethics, and symbolic beliefs. Chapters 5 through 7, respectively, highlight emotional, moral, and cognitive dynamics, although the main conclusion is that these are inseparable in action. By concentrating on individual protesters, chapters 5 and 6 remain on the border of biography and culture, while chapter 7 turns to more collective cultural processes instigated by movement recruiters. Part three looks at the internal culture of protest movements: rituals that sustain the commitment of participants, the many direct pleasures associated with protest activities, the tastes that guide choices among diverse tactics. I address a range of strategies from consumer boycotts to site occupations, violence, and the taking of human life. Part four places protestors in the context of their interactions with others: the news media and potential supporters in the mobilization of resources in chapter 12; and the state and other players in strategic games in chapter 13. I try to show how cultural processes shape both resources and strategies. In chapter 14 I suggest how culture and the other dimensions of protest work together to explain the growth, strategies, and effects of protest movements. Finally, in part five, I adopt a more normative voice. I describe the character type of the protestor, focusing especially on the meaning protest can give to people's lives. After pointing to circumstances in which protest can become dangerous and self-defeating (chapter 16), I discuss why it is nonetheless a vital activity in modern society, both for protestors and for the rest of us (chapter 17).

Of the many claims I make about protestors and the scholars who study them, the main ones are these:

• Protestors are a diverse lot; every one of us cares about something deeply enough so that, under the right circumstances, we might join a protest movement.

• The central satisfaction of protest is the opportunity to articulate, elaborate, alter, or affirm one's moral sensibilities, principles, and allegiances.

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• Protest movements have important benefits for modern societies in the way they develop and disseminate new perspectives, especially but not exclusively moral visions.

• Most scholars, by concentrating on citizenship movements and by slighting culture (especially its moral and emotional dimensions), have inadequately understood the causes, unfolding, and effects of modern protest.

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PART ONE—
BASIC APPROACHES

We already know a lot about the origins, operations, and effects of protest movements, but existing scholarship can be improved upon in several ways. The main paradigms are surprisingly metaphorical, and each favorite conceptual metaphor tends to be extended to cover too much. Concepts turn into entire theories, and practitioners sometimes forget they are using metaphors. In particular, they often forget that their explanatory factors are culturally constructed, not hard, objective facts. My corrective is to identify several basic dimensions of protest which, although they influence each other, cannot be conflated or reduced to each other. Special attention to one of these, culture, not only yields new variables to use in our explanations, but lets us see how the others are constructed and defined through social processes. A sensitivity to another, biography, does the same, as well as allowing us to see that individuals sometimes protest even outside of organized groups and movements.

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Two—
The Classical Paradigms

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.
—Proust

Only recently have students of protest recognized the cultural embeddedness of political action, or appreciated the creativity of protestors in generating tactics, language, organizational forms, and visions of a good society. Most have done neither. At one extreme theorists have demeaned protestors as irrational, altogether outside normal flows of life; at the other they have assumed an extreme form of self-interested rationality that equally divorces protestors from their cultural contexts. In between, mobilization theorists and process theorists have used organizational, political, and historical contexts to understand protest, but have not quite captured the full range of cultural influences, even though these define the rationality of all political action, providing the ultimate criteria for understanding or evaluating protest. In this chapter I examine the century's most influential paradigms of protest, mostly forged to understand citizenship movements.

Theorists of protest have grown more and more aware of the many facets of this complex activity by recognizing additional shaping contexts. New contexts and dimensions have been "discovered" by successive cohorts of scholars, with an explosion of work especially in the past twenty-five years. The cumulative nature of our understanding has been obscured, though, by the tendency of young scholars to carve out niches by attacking established scholars and their paradigms. In part they are driven by the demands of their careers to make a name for themselves. In part the self-image of sociology as a science encourages them to compare and test oversimplified models supposedly representing entire theoretical approaches—a practice John Lofland criticizes as unproductive "theory-bashing." [1] The assumption, drawn from the natural sciences, is that only one model can be right. Either resource mobilization is important or political processes are; either culture and identity drive protest or self-interest does. Every new concept or variable is inflated into an entire theory or approach. The result is often an oscillation between unrealistic extremes, with each generation forgetting the insights of those before it.

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Research traditions driven by case studies have further encouraged partial insights with little opportunity for synthesis. To a large extent, nineteenth-century urban revolts gave us crowd theories; the Nazis inspired mass society theories; bureaucratized trade unions contributed rational-choice models; the civil rights and labor movements yielded the strategic models of political process; the post-1960s cultural movements suggested identity theory; religious movements were the paradigm for developing frame analysis. Each research tradition is a metaphorical language highlighting certain elements of protest suggested by its exemplar movement. These languages are not directly comparable but are often compatible. We need to appreciate cultural factors without forgetting the other important dimensions, and my hope is to develop a cultural approach that encourages synthesis of prior paradigms by identifying the dimensions of protest that these frameworks are especially good at explaining. Each has a special aspect of political action that its theorists have thought about and gathered data about—what Robert Alford and Roger Friedland refer to as each paradigm's "home domain." [2] As I explain in chapter 3, I group the different dimensions into resources, strategies, biography, and culture. Although each dimension affects the others, none can be reduced to the others without a loss of understanding. Yet that reduction is what most research traditions have attempted.

I take resources to be physical capacities and technologies, as well as the money that can buy them—a narrower definition than most. They have relatively clear and fixed prices and uses. Strategies are the moves that individuals and groups make in interaction with others, responding to them and anticipating future responses. Both individuals and organizations have strategies. Biography refers to individuals' mental worlds, conscious and unconscious, which for biographical reasons are subsets of items in the broader culture. It also includes personal quirks. Culture is simply (or not so simply, as we will see) the shared aspects of the mental worlds and their physical representations. Parts of culture (goals, emotions, images) are more analytically independent of resources and strategies; others interact with, even help define, these other dimensions (new ideas for strategies, know-how about deploying resources). We will sort out these dimensions by examining them in the metaphors of existing research traditions.

The Crowd Approach

For most of the twentieth century, scholars viewed protest as irregular and irrational; their lens was a "myth of the madding crow" featuring

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a crowd mentality outside the range of normal human motivations and experiences. Gustave le Bon set the tone in his 1895 book *The Crowd,* saying of participants: "[T]he fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation." [3] In particular, crowds were thought to be prone to violence. And other forms of protest—even the most explicitly political—were thought to be built upon basic crowd elements such as rumors, panics, and milling about. Accounts of collective behavior that followed le Bon consisted primarily of psychology, and that of a pejorative type which reduced protest to the release of pent-up frustration. Herbert Blumer, for example, described a contagious "circular reaction": since members of crowds are apprehensive and unsure of what they want, they merely mimic the behavior of those around them rather than formulating coherent projects.[4]

The primary role of social context, in this tradition, was to explain what abnormal situations—such as mass society or the strains of rapid social change—allowed these eruptions of collective frenzy. Neil Smelser emphasized "structural strain" as a necessary condition for collective action, although he risked circularity by defining strains as including tensions between the desires of groups and the conditions in existence. Any effort at change had to be the result of some strain.[5] "Mass society" theorists specified a lack of ties to intermediary groups and institutions as the cause of mass protest, as "people are available for mass behavior when they lack attachments to proximate objects. When people are divorced from their community and work, they are free to reunite in new ways. Furthermore, those who do not possess a variety of relations with their fellows are disposed to seek new and often remote sources of attachment and allegiance."[6] Protest as a normal dimension of life, carried on by healthy people, seemed out of the question. Through "group mind" imagery, culture and strategy were described in biographical and psychological metaphors, but actual psychological dynamics (at the level of individuals) were only occasionally and poorly specified.[7]

Some observers in this tradition were more sympathetic to protestors, transforming irrationality into creativity. Notably, Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian argued that collective behavior is "normal, not pathological or irrational," even though it differs from stable, institutionalized activities. In the face of "uncertainty about reality," members of a crowd interact in ways that create new cognitive, normative, and emotional understandings: "Some shared redefinition of right and

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wrong in a situation supplies the justification and coordinates the action in collective behavior." As symbolic interactionists, they tied these "emergent norms" to narrow, face-to-face contexts of interaction: "Norms are always connected to conceptions of the situation." [8] If Turner and Killian avoided the worst images of irrationalism, they used interactionist models that grounded social action in an almost momentary context and ignored broader political structures and cultural traditions. Crowds remained a special, unique phenomenon of the moment. The term *collective behavior* implied something less than fully conscious, purposive action. Oddly, Turner and Killian also failed to provide a thorough account of how symbolic meanings are created, negotiated, and deployed. Contagion does occur, but it is not the most interesting aspect of a protest movement, or even of a crowd.[9] Cultural meanings are not created from scratch at a moment's notice; artful protest strategies take longer to emerge than one afternoon's rally or riot.[10]

And yet there are "moments of madness," as Aristide Zolberg called them, when expectations and desires suddenly shift and all things seem possible. Protestors can create an alternative sense of time, in which their actions appear linked to world-historical transformations.[11] These periods are likely to last several days, or weeks, or months, not several hours, and there are many activities, ideas, and sentiments that germinate and develop to prepare these revolutionary moments. Preexisting and widely shared beliefs, feelings, and morals explain the forms this madness takes. Its emergence appears spontaneous primarily to outside observers, who don't know the cultural symbols and traditions that the actions build upon. As James Scott has argued, "If there seems to be an instantaneous mutuality and commonness of purpose, they are surely derived from the hidden transcript [his word for culture]." The open expression of hidden feelings may be necessary for "subordinates [to] fully recognize the extent to which their claims, their dreams, their anger are shared by other subordinates with whom they have not been in direct touch."[12] History seems to move faster at some times than at others; not just species evolution but also political history may be a series of "punctuated equilibria."[13]

The crowd-based tradition often suffered from a lack of direct empirical observation, but it generated several useful insights. In its unfortunate dismissal of protestors as deviants, the paradigm at least allowed for the importance of socially constructed labels, identities, and learning processes—the stuff of deviance research. Ideas were also thought to be important. The paradigm also recognized that certain positions and parts of the social structure, as Smelser argued, are more conducive to protest than others. There are real social prob-

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lems—oppression, inequality, disruption, brutality—that protestors get angry about; they are not simply pursuing their own interests. New understandings and projects do emerge, even though it may take months rather than hours for a group of protestors to work them out. They do this in ongoing relationships, communication, and activities, not in fleeting encounters, but face-to-face interactions remain important for the construction of shared critiques, goals, and emotions. And, as we shall see, singular events can be important for crystallizing new cultural meanings. The collective behavior school at least dropped the hypothesis of sheer irrationality in favor of an image of sudden creativity; their problem, in the interactionist tradition, was in seeing this artfulness as too immediate, spontaneous, and unrelated to other flows of life. Wedded to psychological imagery, they understated or misread the influence of culture. Most crowd theorists, moreover, concluded that the emotional and creative aspects of protest rendered protestors irrational.

The Rationalists

In 1965, while crowd imagery still dominated research on protest, economist Mancur Olson, who like all economists believed that humans are rational in precise, measurable ways that do not vary much across different social contexts, argued that individuals, before engaging in collective action, try to estimate their personal costs of participation and their own likely benefits. Rationality, for him, consisted of calculation. He replaced the rich but pejorative psychology of crowds with the simple assumptions of microeconomics, which hardly flatter humans but do make them appear rational—in fact overly so. Olson claimed that rational individuals would not participate in collective action to attain public goods, since they could "free ride," attaining any benefits without having to pay the cost of the pursuit (a single individual's participation rarely affects the outcome). Collective action thus depends on "selective incentives," such as newsletters or union-sponsored life insurance, that go only to those who participate. [14] The term *collective action* implies greater rationality than *collective behavior* had, although it seems to categorize protest movements with trade associations, international treaties, and any number of other formal arrangements.

Several explicit assumptions, drawn from the root metaphor of market exchange, underlie this "rational-choice" tradition: that individuals make knowledgeable choices based on relatively precise calculations concerning the payoffs of various options; that in order to do this hu-

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mans distinguish between the ends of action (the payoffs) and the means (the costs); that motivations and incentives are sufficiently limited in number to allow calculations and comparisons; and that payoffs are measurable (this usually means that they are measurable in money). Albert Hirschman similarly described this "remarkably parsimonious postulate: that of the self-interested, isolated individual who chooses freely and rationally among alternative courses of action after computing their prospective costs and benefits." [15] Social contexts do not deeply affect choices, as humans in all societies tend to follow the same basic motivations, especially the maximization of wealth. Cultural and institutional contexts are of interest primarily because they provide a distribution of resources and a set of legal constraints and opportunities within which to maneuver. The real focus is on resources and the strategies used to acquire them. Rationality, resources, and interests are usually assumed to be objectively given rather than culturally constructed.

Specifying human motives in addition to the maximization of individual resources transforms the rigorous "strong" model into a looser "weak" one. Philosopher Jon Elster has laid out a typology of other motivations for collective action beyond individual maximization of wealth. We can unthinkingly follow habits and social norms rather than rationally choosing our actions. Or we can act unselfishly because of motives such as altruism (by which we gain pleasure from the pleasure of others) or envy (we gain pleasure from their setbacks). Finally, we can derive satisfaction from the process as well as the outcome of collective action.[16] To further complicate the picture, a protest can be composed of participants driven by different motives, and each protestor may be there for several reasons at once. Motivations quickly proliferate beyond the confines of the spare psychology of calculating models.

In the face of empirical evidence, rationalists have often admitted that humans and organizations "satisfice" rather than maximize: they aim for a certain satisfactory level of profit or resources and sometimes forego opportunities for more. After all, information is costly to obtain, and humans exhibit various biases in how they process it.[17] This wedge of realism renders rationalist models more interesting but less precise. Maximization at least implies (unrealistically, for any empirical application) a single package of strategies, one right answer. But in the realm of satisficing, how much is enough? Only institutional constraints, cultural traditions, and individual biography can provide an answer—and a very complex answer.[18]

Once we have moved from strong to weaker models, we are merely

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saying that people usually have some idea of what they want, and act to attain it. This is plausible, but we need a better biographical or cultural slant to understand what is considered desirable and rational. Mancur Olson originally criticized this expansion as inelegant and perhaps tautological: "[I]t is not possible definitely to say whether a given individual acted for moral reasons or for other reasons in some particular case. A reliance on moral explanations could thus make the theory untestable." Erotic and other psychological motives, he went on to say, could also be squeezed into his model, but "'affective' groups such as family and friendship groups could normally be studied much more usefully with entirely different sorts of theories, since the analysis used in this study does not shed much light on these groups." [19] But the loss in mathematical rigor, I believe, is compensated for by our ability to understand real-life protestors with their complex motivations. Rationalists rarely even try to explain why people have the preferences they do; for this they need to supplement their models with other frameworks. At least one rationalist, political scientist John Ferejohn, points to culture as the most promising candidate.[20]

Michael Taylor has shown that rationalist models work better in some cultural contexts than in others. He argued that peasants' membership in a strong community makes them more likely to rebel by making it rational for them to do so, on account of normative and interested pressures brought to bear upon them. Trust and credibility, shared beliefs and values, and frequent interactions contribute to collective action, and these can only arise through regular social interactions in particular cultural settings. Echoing Elster, Taylor added that rationalist models are not very useful when participants get pleasure from the activity itself, from altruism, or from expressing themselves through the activity ("the desire to be 'true to one's self,' to act consistently with one's deeply help commitments"). Cultural expectations, feelings, and beliefs determine the extent to which calculating rationality comes into play. By adding factors such as these, theorists have described many ways that protestors overcome or avoid Olson's "free rider" problem, which increasingly seems a problem only within farfetched rationalist models.[21]

One branch of rationalism highlights strategic interaction above all else. Game theories, which set calculating actors in motion maneuvering against each other, seem to assume through their central metaphor of a game that the outcome is open. Indeed their purpose is more normative—showing where actors diverge from calculating rationality—than explanatory. And, strictly speaking, like the other research paradigms, they are primarily frameworks and vocabularies rather

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than theories. It is precisely because of the number of possible moves that game theories do not get us far in explaining social action. Thomas Schelling points out that even a two-by-two matrix of possible options and corresponding outcomes will yield, when each of the two players rank-orders all the possible outcomes, more than one thousand possible results. If the two players each had three possible choices (in a three-by-three matrix), the outcomes exceed one billion. All before we add a third player, admit the possibility that each player cares about the other's payoffs, allow one player to make her choices contingent on what the others do, or admit imperfections in knowledge and memory. [22] We can admire virtuosic moves, not predict them.

Game theorists try to identify equilibrium points in strategic games, from which none of the players has an incentive to defect. In many cases, the situation is one that none of the players prefers—as game theorists draw on the broader ability of rationalists to plot the unintended consequences of action. The logic of conflict and strategic interaction can work against the intentions of all those involved, an insight that helps to explain frequent situations of stalemate and polarization. But empirical applications of game theory have been more successful in international relations than collective action. The complex strategic interactions among protestors, their allies, opponents, and the state are unlikely to yield a single equilibrium point, or even a small number—except the obvious case of severe state repression. Absent that, there are usually multiple moves open to all the players. In the heat of play, indeed, it may be more important to make *some* move than to delay in order to make the most *rational* move: in other words a rational actor need not always make rational choices.[23]

Another key insight of game theory is that players have expectations about what the others will do. Because the "right" move for each actor depends partly on upsetting the expectations of other players, obvious moves are not always the best ones. Yet sometimes they are. Artful performances depend on biographical sensitivities that elude formulation; if they could be fully articulated, they would no longer be virtuosic or strategically effective. What is more, any game has its thrills—its intrinsic pleasures—so that players often enjoy the playing itself, a motivation normally not allowed within the rationalist confines of game theory. When the payoffs and the play blur, and when players extend the game out of the "thrill of the chase," theoreticians cannot even declare certain moves as right or wrong.[24] In protest, the ends are not always neatly separable from the activity supposed to pursue them; the activity itself is pleasurable. For all these reasons, game theories merely set the players in motion.

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By insisting so strongly on the rationality of protestors, theorists in Olson's tradition set up a dubious contrast between rational and irrational that has dogged studies of protest ever since. Is protest rational or irrational? This dichotomy—unsociological in its ignoring of social context—has confused many observers, who feel that the only way to avoid portraying protestors as irrational is to paint them as rational in Olson's calculating way. In the strategic dimension, protestors can make mistakes. But irrationality is not the making of mistakes; it is an inability to learn from them. Rationality consists in improving one's flow of decisions by learning from experience and the environment. Mistakes, as long as they are not fatal, can be part of this process. To question protestors' rationality at the biographical level—another possibility—would be to question their ability to know their own desires or pleasures, and this would require a more elaborate biographical model than any researchers of protest have yet developed. Finally, to question the rationality of protestors' physical resources or cultural traditions (as opposed to how they use them strategically) would make little sense. Protestors can be criticized as mistaken, immoral, or powerless, but rarely as irrational. Yet the fear that they might somehow portray protestors as irrational continues to haunt scholars.

Dennis Chong has done the most to apply rational-choice concepts to a single case of protest, the American civil rights movement. Dismissing strong rational-choice models, he admits that material incentives by themselves can hardly account for much protest activity; besides, if selective material incentives were sufficient to motivate membership, then those who were indifferent or even opposed to a group's goals should also have the same incentive to join! [25]

Examining motivations that rationalists usually minimize, such as the expression of feelings, the pleasures of protest, and concern for one's reputation, Chong tries to show that these can be covered by rational-choice models. He argues that "the desires to gain or sustain friendships, to maintain one's social standing, and to avoid ridicule and ostracism are all social goals that constitute selective incentives for individuals to participate in collective action."[26] These are standard "social" goals of weak models, in contrast to the purely material self-interest found in strong models. Chong argues that a good reputation has various personal payoffs: "An esteemed reputation has considerable instrumental value in a society." Yet he also says that one of the best ways to maintain a reputation for altruism and other virtues is actually to become that kind of person: "[I]t may be in my interest to develop genuine (or not consciously calculating) concern for the welfare of others." Rationality becomes, for him, "a delicate combination

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of thinking as well as feeling." [27] Chong describes how numerous civil rights activists were shamed into various forms of participation, in part because their own reputations were on the line.

Chong shows less than he asserts. His main contribution is to demonstrate that diverse emotional motivations are compatible with self-interested rationality. This is a surprise only to those attracted by rational-choice theory's strict contrast between rationality (based on material incentives) and emotions (most other motivations). If, as he admits, "it is unclear to me how we can disentangle the motivations that impel such people [those who have thoroughly internalized group norms] to behave in the manner they do," then there is no reason to conclude that protestors are more motivated by long-run concern for their own reputations than by genuine altruism or sympathy.[28] People often do what they do because they think it's right, not because they have a long-term interest in cultivating reputations as the kind of people who do what's right (a rather convoluted sequence). To separate individual motives from their social supports like this is possible only within the artificial confines of rational-choice theory; using the theory's own assumptions to test it is bound to confirm it.

Chong claims to bring nonprivate benefits, such as fame, honor, and power, into a rationalist model. He does this by showing that such social goods have rewards, psychic and otherwise, for individuals, and hence can motivate individuals without violating rationalist assumptions. But his ability to translate them into what they mean for individuals does not show that individuals are motivated by purely private rewards, for the rewards of honor and so on are not definable in purely individual terms. A full account of them involves both an individual and a social description, and only a rationalist would be tempted in the first place to doubt that honor and fame motivate people. To show that they are compatible with rationalism opens the door to culture. Without exactly saying so, Chong is suggesting how to incorporate cultural dynamics in rational choice models, as when he says, "the *internalization* of norms through an elaborate social process, which has typically appeared superfluous in a rational choice calculus, may be viewed as a community cost-saving device in the institution of a moral system of rewards and punishment."[29] While trying to collapse culture and biography to strategic action, Chong makes a better case for their compatibility and complementarity.

Models of calculating rationality provide, at best, rough boundary conditions; people will rarely behave in highly irrational ways, and if they do, they may eventually run out of the material resources necessary for sustained strategic action. Even this extreme case sometimes

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occurs, though, as with martyrs and strong altruists. But even if we accept that the bounds normally operate, calculating models say little about people's actions within them. Rationalists claim to start from individual psychology, but they have reduced it so much they have little to say about it. I too am reluctant to view protestors as irrational, and Olson provided a good corrective to crowd-based models that portrayed them in that light. In his tradition strategic actors have little to strategize about, however, since they are stuck with a psychology too emaciated to carry much explanatory weight. The rationalists have too narrow a view of rationality: they are limited by their own key concept. Rationality should not be equated, as the rationalists would have it, with maximization. Biography and cultural traditions, once they are allowed to thicken rationality, lead far beyond the neat algorithms of game theories and rational choice. They introduce practices too openended to allow us to predict outcomes easily, and intrinsic pleasures too varied to allow us to specify correct moves. They may lead us altogether away from a rational-irrational contrast.

Game theory's focus on the mutual expectations of strategic interaction, especially in conditions when communication is limited, will prove useful when we later examine the logic of strategy. Few other theorists have attended to the strategic dimension of protest as directly as the rationalists. Just as some insights of crowd theories can be revived by placing them in a broader cultural context, so key contributions of the rationalists can be strengthened when we fill them in with cultural and biographical meanings. Game theory will also usefully remind us that the logic of strategic interaction can leave all players in situations they did not desire, such as costly prolonged conflicts, polarization of positions, and protracted stalemates.

The Mobilization Paradigm

The second, fatal blow to crowd-based theories came in the 1970s with the new gestalt of "resource mobilization," within which many American students of protest still operate. Most of these theorists came of age in the 1960s with sympathetic views of what social movements might do. Their main contribution was to show that protest was a regular part of politics, that protestors were normal people pursuing reasonable goals, and that available economic resources helped determine what protestors could achieve. Refinements of this tradition have shown, among other things, how activists finance their activities, what tactics tend to be more successful, and what role state structures play in shaping outcomes. Some of this work could be read as a "how-to"

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guide for activists, addressing the practical exigencies of protest. The urge to protest—precisely what earlier generations had feared and tried to explain—was now taken for granted, on the grounds that all groups in society have interests to advance and defend. "Grievances and disaffection," said one prominent proponent, even as he used contradictory adjectives, "are a fairly permanent and recurring feature of the historical landscape." [30] Conflating objective social conditions with people's perceptions and interpretations of those conditions, these theorists overlooked the cultural meanings that might nurture moral outrage over long-standing conditions or new public policies.

Mobilization theorists are, in a way, rationalists who have built formal organizations and sometimes political and historical context into their models, recognizing that not only individuals, but groups and organizations calculate costs and benefits. John McCarthy and Mayer Zald emphasized the ways that formal organizations, animated by entrepreneurial leaders, accumulate resources for collective action; organizations as well as leaders are rational and primarily materialist in their motivations. Zald and McCarthy have demonstrated a variety of practical constraints on protest, which does not consist of angry individuals but people working in institutional settings. People need time to participate; organizations need money to survive; enough money has even allowed the growth of a large social-movement industry with professionals whose careers are devoted to founding and running protest groups. By offering selective incentives or shifting certain initial costs onto group leaders, formal organizations overcome many of the challenges to collective action that Mancur Olson had posited.[31]

Zald and McCarthy's focus on formal organizations and the resources needed to maintain them has been especially fruitful in generating concrete hypotheses, in addition to a rich language of organizational and monetary metaphors. For instance, financial dependence on direct-mail contributors, or "isolated constituents," implies less stable flows of resources and a heightened concern with advertising. A protest group's own contributors will be a central audience—distinct from targets and beneficiaries—for its action and rhetoric. Competition among social movement organizations for contributions may lead not only to hostility but to specialization, or a segmentation of audiences. Much of the behavior of social-movement organizations can be explained with the language of organizational imperatives—including why some groups grow more conservative.[32]

As one of the dominant paradigms, these models are often unfairly caricatured, because every graduate student of protest sharpens her critical teeth on them. Too often, McCarthy and Zald are transformed

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into straw men whose explanations relied exclusively on resource distributions. Mobilization, though, is a multifaceted process that also involves strategies and cultural meanings. When we distinguish initial distributions of resources from the strategic activities that can attract (in many cases, create) new resources, resource mobilization can be interpreted as a strategic process of cultural persuasion.

Like the rationalists, mobilization theorists tend to assume instrumental motives of action: groups act for strategic advantage, individuals act in pursuit of their own interests. Some self-interested rationality is usually present, whether for organizations or individuals. Organizational and individual interests are usually assumed to be objectively defined, not culturally constructed. If the irrationalist tradition encouraged an image of angry, frustrated mobs, and the rationalist school one of self-interested, calculating individuals, then the mobilization tradition crafted a picture of purposive, formal organizations. Individuals are capable of calculating, and caring about, the costs and benefits that would accrue not just to them, but to the collectivities and organizations to which they belong. Once we admit this, though, we immediately need to ask what group boundaries and identities they perceive and care about. Mobilization theorists seem to fear that, if we recognize the culturally constructed nature of groups, grievances, and interests, protestors will once again appear irrational.

In rejecting the psychological reduction of the crowd theorists, many mobilization theorists eschew biographical factors altogether, sometimes on the peculiar grounds that these are the domain of another discipline. These theorists often assume that objective self-interest is a sufficient motivating force, which is a reasonable assumption until one faces movements like animal rights that are not based on any perceptible interests of the protestors. Moral and altruistic incentives, at least, must play a role. Cultural and biographical processes help us understand why individuals care about some benefits but not others. And even self-interest is a cultural construction, a perception. It is not always immediately obvious.

The most precise image of resource mobilization involves an entrepreneur or organization conducting activities to extract usable resources from a population; the most clearly defined resource is money. Beyond these easily measured quantities, mobilization perspectives run the risk of becoming tautological, making the entire social world into resources. Even moral support, public opinion, psychological states, and favorable symbolism have been considered resources. [33] In some cases, anything that protestors can use to their advantage comes to be labeled as a resource. Problems arise with this overextension of

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the label to cover such disparate phenomena. Sometimes, rich strategic or cultural dynamics are reduced so that they are analyzed as though they were static, pre-existing resources. At other times, their complexity is maintained, but the term *resources* no longer makes much sense. The considerable power of the concept can be retained by restricting its use, not applying it wantonly.

Money and meanings operate under different logics. Where money usually has a clear and universal buying power in society, cultural meanings are often local, variable, and contested. [34] Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina usefully insist that resources be countable and transferable, mostly restricting the term to money and the physical objects it can buy: copy machines, bullhorns, corn supplies, a radio station, a factory.[35] Money entails a zero-sum game: more of it in one place means less in another. But enthusiasm and cultural resonance are not zerosum and can be enhanced without taking resources from other uses. Symbols, like other forms of information, are infinitely reproducible. They are also less easily controlled than physical resources. Through the news media or computer networks, even tiny, poor groups can broadcast symbolic messages, although they don't always control the meanings. Another difference is that meanings and feelings can have a special connection to a particular person, a charismatic leader, and they can disappear when she dies, defects, or is discredited. You can't take money with you when you die, but you can take the feelings and thoughts you arouse in others. Meanings can have similar ties to particular places or settings, as in rituals, and cannot be transferred to other settings as easily as money can. Finally, many cultural practices improve or expand when used, while monetary resources diminish. A protestor becomes a better public speaker through practice. A song or slogan catches on and spreads. Even when protest groups "invest" money to get more money, as in direct-mail campaigns, they are not actually getting a return on that money (as one does on a savings bond). They are deploying rhetoric and symbols to attract new resources; the cultural meanings, disseminated by means of money, cause the payoff just as much as the money does. They are like factors of production: both the means of dissemination and the message are necessary, together creating a product with a return. Artful protest involves diverse practices, not just the expenditure of resources.[36]

Pre-existent organizations and social networks have also been considered resources that mobilizers can exploit, in that they aid recruitment.[37] But they are also the stuff of social life itself, the life forms and social contexts in which people live. When the population or group from which resources are to be extracted comes to be viewed as a resource, the ends of protest have disappeared, and we are left only

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with the means of extraction. Resources have become everything. Resources and social organization are both important to protest, but they are more powerful concepts when not conflated. Physical resources and McCarthy and Zald's formal organizations, we shall see, are crisper concepts than "social organization," which we'll scrutinize in the next chapter.

Some have almost reduced the culture in social movements to a form of social structure, consisting of interpersonal networks. Anthony Oberschall discusses the importance of "community": the degree to which a collectivity with a grievance is already organized will increase its ability to launch collective action. [38] Charles Tilly emphasizes the importance for collective action of two dimensions of groups: the extent to which potential participants form a category distinct from others, and the extent to which they have interpersonal networks linking them to each other.[39] These Durkheimian factors are similar to the notions of "group" and "grid" of Mary Douglas, who (unlike Tilly) explicitly describes the cultural processes needed to create and define each dimension.[40] Innumerable symbols and rituals lie behind each boundary in a classification, and norms, emotions, and habits reinforce (if they do not create) the ties of networks. The resulting sense of collective solidarity and identity will encourage potential participants to pursue collective as well as individual interests, so that they may participate in protest even in the absence of organizational structure and selective (material) incentives.[41]

Despite its considerable power, much mobilization research is restricted by the rationalist assumptions embodied, often implicitly, within it. In spite of recognizing that groups as well as individuals have interests, the paradigm frequently persists with a narrow set of human motivations, largely centered around the acquisition of money and power, and it normally distinguishes too sharply between the means and the ends of collective action. Ironically the concept of resources is often vaguely specified, perhaps because it is overextended. Missing in this influential tradition are the direct pleasures of protest, the moral visions being pursued, and the emotions accompanying political activities—in other words most of the mental and symbolic worlds of culture and biography. Strategic action is there but not given its full due, because it is conflated with resources.

The Political Process Approach

Some of the same theorists who articulated mobilization theories have also elaborated approaches to protest with more emphasis on politics and the state, and hence on strategy. Foremost among them is Charles

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Tilly, who accepts the importance of material resources but also places mobilization activities in the broad context of urbanization, industrialization, the rise of nation-states, and the development of national markets. He shows how, as the scale of the nation-state and corporations expanded during the past two hundred years, collective action occurred on a larger, more organized scale and hence was able to be proactive rather than defensive and reactive. Most notably, national unions replaced sporadic and local machine-breaking and other forms of resistance. [42] By retaining the rationalist term *collective action,* Tilly is concerned to show the continuities with trade unions, political parties, and other more institutionalized forms of political action. Although known as resource mobilization theorists, Tilly, along with William Gamson and Anthony Oberschall, have focused less on material resources and more on states, strategies, and political mobilization, thus leaving some room for grievances and ideologies and a lot for elite responses.[43] Their focus on political power and the environment that social movements face is a healthy way of linking protestors to other strategic actors in society, recognizing the importance of both resources and strategic choices.

In this "political process" tradition, Sidney Tarrow, Doug McAdam, and others have shown the crucial effect of "political opportunity structures" on the unfolding and outcomes of protest, adding a clear model of political context to organizational and historical ones.[44] McAdam points to three key causal factors behind the emergence of protest: changing opportunities in the political environment, especially state responses to protest; the existing level of organization in the aggrieved community; and the population's assessment of its chances for success (also called the level of insurgent consciousness or cognitive liberation). The process perspective's emphasis on opportunities provided by the state, mostly its occasional slackening of repression, shows how strongly this tradition has been marked by the use of citizenship movements as its exemplars, for these have faced the strongest and most constant repression. Most researchers in this tradition, having studied the labor and civil rights movements, take repression for granted. In McAdam's early definition, social movements are even defined as "those organized efforts, *on the part of excluded groups,* to promote or resist changes in the structure of society that involve recourse to noninstitutional forms of political participation."[45] Assuming he means legally or politically excluded, this is a sure way to focus our attention on protestors' interactions with the state.

Process theorists implicitly tend to contrast outsiders or challengers, who must use extrainstitutional tactics, with insiders or members, who

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can use institutional tactics. This distinction works for many citizenship movements but not for post-citizenship ones. Even insiders occasionally resort to extrainstitutional protest. Christian Smith, himself sympathetic to process approaches, criticizes this either-or dichotomy: "In fact, the majority of modern social movements possess *moderate* amounts of political and economic resources, enjoy *limited* access to political decision making, employ both disruptive *and* institutionalized means of political influence, mobilize new movement-carrier groups *while simultaneously* collaborating with established political organizations, and vocalize a mix of conciliatory, persuasive, *and* confrontational rhetoric." [46]

If resources are the root metaphor of the mobilization framework, political opportunity structures are the heart of most political process theories—and just as overextended as resources were.[47] Here is Tarrow's recent formulation: "By political opportunity structure, I mean consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure. Theorists of political opportunity structure emphasize the mobilization of resources *external* to the group."[48] Every dimension of protest is packed into this formulation, leaving nothing that is not part of a political opportunity structure. There are political structures which, despite the disclaimer that threatens to obfuscate the concept, are normally formal and "relatively" permanent; it is hard to see what beyond this is meant by "consistent." Culture and biography must be involved if expectations are to be changed. Resources are also here, even if restricted to other people's resources (it is not clear if this is an overextension of the concept of resources, of political opportunity structures, or of both). Tarrow is mostly referring to strategies (how others *use* their resources), even though that is the least apparent dimension in the passage. Finally, we see a familiar hint of circularity in that whatever "provides incentives" for collective action seems to be a political opportunity structure. When there is collective action, there must be a favorable political opportunity structure. When Tarrow specifies four kinds of change in political opportunity structures, only one—expanding access to decision-making power—has a clear element of structure, mixed with some strategic action. The other three—changing political alignments, new allies, and divisions among elites—seem to consist almost entirely of strategic choices and actions consciously made by groups and individuals.

Anything that, in retrospect, helped a movement mobilize or win a victory tends to be labeled a political opportunity structure. In one

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extreme case, even the grievance that spurred a movement is labeled a political opportunity structure because the movement would not have existed without it! [49] Although the process approach corrects game theory by adding rules, resources, and institutions to the strategic mix, the potential focus on strategic interaction tends to be lost in the formulation of opportunities as *structures*—as though they were relatively permanent rather than constantly or potentially in flux. Similarly, although process theorists have elaborated on rules (legal, administrative, and political) as distinguished from (material) resources, they often collapse the two again by using the same label for both. (Rules, in my scheme, would fall under culture.) The term *structure* misleadingly implies relatively fixed entities, so that attention is often diverted away from open-ended strategic interplay. If the point is to highlight strategic political opportunities, adding the word *structure* creates an oxymoron. Culture, resources, and strategy are conflated. We must at least distinguish between fleeting strategic opportunities and relatively fixed aspects of political systems within which strategic maneuvering occurs.[50]

As we did with resources, we can strengthen the concept of political opportunity structure by restricting it, not expanding it. Hanspeter Kriesi proposes confining it to "those aspects of a political system that determine movement development independently of the purposive action of the actors involved." He aims at excluding the strategic dimension in favor of what I would call structure, although he would include not only the political system's formal institutional structure but its "informal procedures and prevailing strategies with regard to challengers, and the configuration of power relevant for the confrontation with the challengers"—two things that strategies consciously aim at changing.[51] State strategies, after all, evolve (often rapidly) in response to movement strategies. I prefer to restrict the term more, applying it to political institutions such as voting systems, constitutional divisions of powers, and so on that change very rarely or slowly. In this sense, "political structure" might be a reasonably autonomous dimension of protest alongside resources and the others—although structures ultimately come out of strategic conflicts.

In process models, culture, like everything else, is subordinated to political structure. In a telling offhand example, Tarrow mentions the Russian Revolution as having opened a political opportunity for revolutionary groups around the world: "If the end of World War I produced more and more energetic movements than the end of World War II, the international incentive of the Bolshevik Revolution had much to do with it."[52] But what kind of incentive was the revolution? It surely

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inspired capitalist governments to more repression of revolutionary movements, not less; it must have solidified political and economic elites, not divided them. What it did was to inspire revolutionaries as a cultural symbol, in its reassuring message that they were on the side of history. In other words it operated mostly in the realms of culture and biography, not political structure and strategy. Culture and biography rarely achieve full independence in process models. McAdam, for instance, recognizes the importance of cognitive liberation, but in his causal diagram explaining the rise of social movements, cognitive liberation is a function of indigenous organizational strength and expanding political opportunities. [53] Cognitive processes—let alone emotions or moral visions—lose much of their independent theoretical (although not empirical) status. When McAdam argues that "[m]ediating between opportunity and action are people and the subjective meanings they attach to their situations," he implies that there are objectively given opportunities, which potential protestors either see or do not see correctly. There is no room for culture to shape those opportunities, or to spur protest in the absence of "objective" opportunities. Deep structural change ("broad socioeconomic processes") has no causal arrow pointing to it in McAdam's diagram, and it is the only factor whose arrow points to political opportunity structures. Cognitive liberation can either succeed or fail; either way it does not affect political opportunities. Structures seem autonomous, while culture does not.[54]

Cognitive liberation depends on cultural processes, some of which may be independent of strategies and political structures. For people to think that repression has eased, they need to interpret the pieces of information they receive, which may or may not be accurate. As crowd theorists saw, rumors can be as effective in shifting perceptions as sound information—because they are often taken to be sound. Process theorists have had little to say about this interpretive filter, giving the impression that potential protestors respond straightforwardly to objective conditions and probabilities of success.[55] Objective conditions do affect perceptions, but only as one factor among many. The emotional inspiration of events like the Russian Revolution is often central, so much so that people may even protest without thinking that they can win—and perhaps even in the absence of favorable opportunities. Legal scholar and long-time civil rights activist Derrick Bell argues that African-Americans have fought for civil rights to bring dignity and meaning to their own lives, even though many—like Bell—believe that racism and racial oppression will never vanish from the United States. He recounts a conversation with a Mississippi woman during

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the civil rights movement. When he asked how she had the courage to continue despite life-threatening retaliation, she replied, "I can't speak for everyone, but as for me, I am an old woman. I live to harass white folks." Bell comments, "Mrs. MacDonald didn't say she risked everything because she hoped or expected to win out over the whites who, as she well knew, held all the economic and political power, and the guns as well. Rather, she recognized that—powerless as she was—she had and intended to use courage and determination as a weapon to, in her words, 'harass white folks.' . . . Her goal was defiance, and its harassing effect was likely more potent precisely because she did what she did without expecting to topple her oppressors. Mrs. MacDonald avoided discouragement and defeat because at the point that she determined to resist her oppression, she was triumphant." [56] The Russian Revolution inspired action even at the same time that it decreased the objective odds of success. For many, martyrdom is its own reward.

Because of his civil rights exemplar, McAdam assumes the aggrieved community to be a relatively fixed entity rather than something to be created through cultural processes. A citizenship movement has an unusually close link with some underlying collectivity in whose name it claims to speak, yet even here much work needs to be done to link the movement and the collectivity. McAdam's own rich research shows more room for cognitive and other cultural processes than he provides for in his theoretical framework. Take the much-discussed role of black churches in supporting the civil rights movement.[57] They provided more than opportunities for bloc recruitment into the new movement, according to McAdam, who then describes the rich activities, fervor, and conviction of churchgoers. Protest was in many ways an extension of this churchgoing role. After hinting at all sorts of cognitive, moral, and emotional dynamics, though, McAdam labels them "the degree of prior integration" of the black community, apparently a straightforward matter of "structural" opportunity.[58]

Process theorists have also given us the popular idea of cycles of protest, in which waves of protest alternate with quieter periods. Removal of repression appears crucial: "As opportunities widen and information spreads about the susceptibility of a political system to challenge, not only activists, but ordinary people test the limits of social control."[59] Yet repression is not the whole story: Tarrow says that symbols and frames are also important, as is the creation of mutually supportive protest groups. The idea of clustering may work better for citizenship than for post-citizenship movements, since the former are making parallel demands on the state, which, if it gives in to one group, may have difficulty resisting the others. Perhaps a special fam-

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ily of rhetoric supports citizenship movements and can easily be transferred from, say, the civil rights movement to the women's movement. [60] A series of post-industrial movements have, in contrast, persisted for thirty years, centered around environmentalism, with no obvious changes in state repression. The problem is not that cycles don't exist, but that much of their force comes from cultural factors—skills and know-how, emotional inspiration, raised expectations, shared rhetoric and images—that have been undertheorized. For the paradigmatic citizenship movements on which most process models have been based, repression is so salient that the considerable cultural work these movements do can easily be overlooked.

Mobilization and process theorists have set protest in its historical, organizational, and political contexts. The strategic interplay of multiple actors appeared in these traditions, even when it was theorized as structures. There was also an occasional nod to culture. But in general the willingness to protest has been assumed—reasonably enough in cases of oppressed or excluded groups—so that explaining protest boiled down to explaining opportunities to act. Without extensive attention to culture and biography, it is difficult to distinguish willingness from opportunity, so willingness was dropped as something to be explained. The overly interior focus of crowd traditions, relying on even while misspecifying protestors' psychologies, has been replaced by an almost equally imbalanced concern with the exterior environment. Each of the major paradigms has tended to concentrate on a single powerful metaphor—crowd psychology, strategic rationality, material resources, political opportunities—associated with one dimension of protest, letting other dimensions fall into its shadow.

Desensitizing Concepts

Each of the research traditions I've described has its own language, images, examples, and hypotheses, especially suited to understanding one or two dimensions of protest, to which the other dimensions tend to be reduced. The paradigms are impossible to "test" against each other in any way that would prove one better than another, since each is good at different things. I hope to have identified the strengths of each. What is more, I believe that the strengths are often complementary, since the traditions so often focus on different basic dimensions.

Excessive concentration on one aspect of reality and the concept or label that represents it is a perennial risk of the social sciences.[61] We cannot avoid metaphors, yet it is easy to overextend them, especially when we are trying to compensate for past neglect of some aspect of

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reality. Everything in sight gets redescribed as a resource, or as a political opportunity structure, whether or not the metaphor fits well. Over time, observers of protest have been obsessed with crowds, with emergence, with calculating rationality, with resources, with formal organizations, and with the political structures that activists face. The same thing could happen to culture, which itself already has so many facets. A new word or idea, like a new musical recording, gets used over and over until we are familiar (sometimes too familiar) with it. Often, the next generation attacks it out of overfamiliarity. We can't do without these metaphors, but we need not limit ourselves to a single one. For each metaphor, we can work in its shadow but also outside it, with the grain but also against it. Each metaphor captures one aspect of protest best, distorting others. Lumping things together can be useful, but distinguishing them is also necessary. [62] I hope to show how culture is related to the aspects of protest already heavily scrutinized, not to replace them with it.

It is useful to push a new metaphor as far as possible, generating insights by viewing phenomena through new lenses. But we should not be confused by this. Moral authority and public opinion are not resources in the same way that money is, and we miss a lot if we insist that they are. It is this overextension that explains why the guiding metaphor of a research tradition is often vaguely theorized: it covers too much. In the end rationalists thin out rationality to such a degree that they have little useful to say about it. Mobilization theorists are often surprisingly mute about the dynamics of resources, as process theorists are about political opportunity structures. Even identity, we shall see, remains hazy in the writing of identity theorists. The more work a concept is called upon to do, the less specified it can be. It can desensitize us to other vantage points, other dimensions.

Part of this overextension of new concepts involves creating a new theory on the basis of what is only a new variable. Instead of adding political opportunities to explanations alongside resources and crowd dynamics, a new "approach" develops, and its models are compared with those derived from the other concepts. Arguments are couched in terms of theories, not variables. Another form of overextension involves reifying each new concept into something "hard" and "objective," a solid starting place for an explanation. Crowd dynamics, rationality, interests, resources, and political opportunities have all been defined by their partisans as objective facts, not shaped by social context, not culturally constructed according to the meanings held by social actors. Apparently, the fear is that recognition of the cultural construction of these factors would diminish their importance, trans-

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forming them from rock-bottom starting points into things that could themselves be explained. *Yet virtually every one of these major concepts can be analyzed as a cultural product instead of an objective fact.*

Alongside these forms of *theoretical overextension* of concepts is the kind of *empirical overextension* I mentioned in the first chapter: the tendency to make broad statements about movement dynamics on the basis of a single case study or research into a single kind of movement. We should at least leave it as an open question whether, say, citizenship, post-citizenship, religious, and right-wing nationalist movements operate in similar ways. Theoretical and empirical overextension easily reinforce one another. First, one mechanism or dimension may be especially salient in a particular movement—as critiques of technology were in the antinuclear movement or interactions with the state were for the civil rights movement—so that a single concept seems especially important. Then, in the absence of evidence from a variety of movements, it is easy to believe that this effect holds across all movements. For the most part, social movement theory has advanced like this, one new movement and new concept at a time. But this process has its pitfalls.

At the risk of the same kind of overextension, I'll argue that culture is not only an independent dimension alongside resources, biography, and strategies. It can be this, as when it is defined as cognitive grids that encourage or discourage solidarity, or as repertories of strategic know-how. But because all action involves intention and thought, culture also involves the construction of the other categories: what counts as a resource under what circumstances, what works as a strategy and why, what an individual absorbs through socialization. Neither resources nor strategies are "objective" realities that can be identified outside of their social context, independent of the mental worlds of their users. Even physical resources such as bullhorns or fax machines require familiarity, habits, and messages for effective use. Sometimes culture is a simple causal factor that can be contrasted with other causal factors; at other times (or in other ways) it helps define these other factors too. At some times it is more explicit, at others more implicit, buried in action and the social construction of other categories. There may be a tension between these two aspects, but I hope it's a creative one. The limitation of game theorists, mobilizationists, and process theorists is not that they're wrong, but that they don't look behind the curtain at the origins of the factors they take as independent "givens." This role of culture is the reason, I think, that a cultural perspective is good for helping us to see the autonomy of all four dimensions from each other. And by carefully demarcating the different roles

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of culture, I hope to avoid the conceptual overextension that has plagued most paradigms.

I am simply redescribing protest movements, suggesting a new language that highlights some aspects of these movements obscured by other approaches. I am not arguing against the older descriptions, especially when they are defined well, and I shall be concerned to show how they relate to the cultural concepts I am about to present. I am offering a new lens, or to put it in trendy language, a new narrative of the growth, functioning, and consequences of social movements. Before I address the dynamics of culture and constructionism, and the research on protest that has begun to take them seriously, I shall examine the basic dimensions of protest in order to see what we lose when we conflate them.

• Scholars of social movements have gradually added more dimensions to our understanding of these complex phenomena.

• Scholars often forget prior discoveries, or overextend their favored metaphor to cover too much.

• New concepts are also frequently inflated into theoretical approaches rather than used to enrich existing ones.Theorists tend to view their favorite concepts as hard and objective rather than socially or culturally interpreted and defined.

• Case studies offer few limits to this metaphorical overextension, allowing an empirical overextension as well.

• Culture differs from other dimensions in that it is a fundamental component in the construction of the other dimensions as well as being its own set of variables.

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Three—
Basic Dimensions of Protest

. . . Facts seize hold of the web
And leave it ash. Still, it is the personal,
Interior life that gives us something to think about.
The rest is only Drama.
—John Ashbery,*"But What Is the Reader to Make of This?"*

Having criticized other theorists for conflating autonomous dimensions of protest, I shall try to establish why I think that four dimensions—resources, strategies, culture, and biography—are irreducible, much as they affect one another. And since others will immediately step forward with additional contenders for this list, I shall examine other facets of protest, especially political structures, social networks, and formal organizations. I consider these reducible to my four, even though in some cases it may be useful to think of them as independent. I try to define all these dimensions in table 3.1.

The best way to curtail flights of metaphor is to insist that our concepts have concrete referents in the social world; they must correspond to objects and situations and feelings we can point to with some precision. One strength of my four dimensions is that they correspond roughly to the four worlds toward which, according to Jürgen Habermas, social action is oriented. He has elaborated these worlds in some detail. Resources, as I define them, are the tools through which humans instrumentally change the objective physical world. Biography deals with what Habermas calls "expressive action" related to an inner, subjective self. Strategy and culture are actions and understandings directed toward other people in an interpersonal social world, although strategic action treats others as objects to manipulate, and the communicative action of culture treats them more as subjects with whom to share our understanding. [1] Jeffrey Alexander seconds this last distinction, usefully adding that these are analytic distinctions, in that any action combines the strategic and the communicative: "Every action is both interpretation and strategization; each process ensues at every moment in time."[2] Yet because different audiences for our actions are more or less salient at different times, I think that the mix of strategic and discursive varies in different situations and actions,

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Table 3.1 Basic Dimensions of Protest

Dimension	Definition
Autonomous Dimensions	
Resources	Physical technologies and their capacities, or the money to buy these technologies. Related to what Habermas calls the objective, physical world, and to a form of action he dubs "instrumental."
Strategies	The choices made by individuals and organizations in their interactions with other players, especially opponents. Related to the intersubjective world, when others are treated instrumentally, and so to what Habermas calls strategic action.
Culture	Shared understandings (emotional, moral, and cognitive) and their embodiments. Some are shared primarily by protest groups (movement culture), others more broadly. Related to the intersubjective world, when others are treated communicatively, and to Habermas's communicative action.
Biography	Individual constellations of cultural meanings, personalities, sense of self, derived from biographical experiences. Related to the inner, subjective world.
Derivative Dimensions	
Political structure	Relatively fixed aspects of the political system, including constitutions and laws, electoral systems, administrative boundaries.
Social networks	Patterns of interaction, especially communication or cooperation, among individuals or organizations.
Formal organizations	Legal entities with explicit purposes, boundaries, defined roles, flows of resources, and stable interactions with other organizations.

something Alexander seems to recognize when he later discusses the mutual influence of the two components (which can only influence each other if they are distinguishable): "Understanding not only provides the environment for strategization; it profoundly affects the calculation of strategic interest itself. One must immediately add, however, that this interactive effect works both ways: to some degree interpretation is itself a strategic phenomenon. We do not try to 'understand' every impression that enters our consciousness. Considerations of nearness and farness, time, energy, and the extent of possible knowledge all come forcefully into play. [3] Strategy usually involves efforts to transform the social world; culture attempts to understand it. Even if every action has some of each, the logics of the two dimensions differ.

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These are analytic dimensions, in that a concrete action involves all four of them, and distinguishing them is an act of the observer. Individuals think and act in a world that is both physical and cultural, and those thoughts and actions—as Alexander says—contain both strategy and culture. We are also enmeshed in networks of other individuals and—in today's world—a myriad of formal organizations.

The purpose of distinguishing the four dimensions is to make as concrete as possible what we mean by different concepts, in order to discourage the overextension of metaphors. When we talk about resources, we know to look at physical capacities and the money to buy them; when we discuss strategies, we look for gamelike responses to others and expectations of how others will respond in turn. When the word *culture* appears, we scurry to find meanings, feelings, and judgments that are shared, usually because they are embodied in texts or images, or reinforced by expectations. Although students of protest rarely mention biography, an interest in it should send them to observations of individuals in order to see how their biographical histories have left them with different selections of cultural meanings and strategic tastes, often summed up in concepts such as personality, self, or personal identity. *Only by distinguishing the different dimensions carefully can we observe how they influence each other.*

Resources and Strategies

We saw in chapter 2 that the main paradigms of protest have especially elaborated the dimensions of resources and strategies. Although game theories leave room for resources and for a crude psychology, they proclaim the importance of strategy, especially the role of mutual expectations and unintended outcomes. Unfortunately there is little of interest left in strategic choice once the substance of biography and culture is taken away, aside from a few equilibrium traps—which tell us more about the effects of choices than about how the choices are made. By examining the surrounding environment of protest movements, and the many actors in that environment, political process theorists have also concentrated on strategies, with passing nods to resources and to cultural processes such as cognitive liberation. Resource mobilization traditions have been caricatured as concerned primarily with initial resource distributions, although most authors have also attended to mobilization strategies.

Yet resources and mobilization belong to different dimensions of protest. Having resources is one thing; accumulating and using them are another. Availability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for their use. At a simple physical, technological level, a state equipped

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with tanks, tear gas, helicopters, and automatic weapons is *capable* of more severe repression than one armed with crossbows or muskets. But the decision to use tanks or tear gas is influenced by more than just their availability; it is affected by perceptions about the justice of protestors' claims, of how the news media would respond, of whether political opponents could use these actions to their own advantage. These are cultural and especially strategic considerations. In addition, biographical factors, including personality traits and idiosyncratic emotional responses, affect important decisions such as whether a king flees in the face of a crowd, orders his troops to fire on them, issues concessions, or faces them down. Strategic decisions depend partly on resources—tear gas did not exist in 1789—but also on cultural meanings and biography. But strategic calculations have an additional logic of their own, related to past choices and stances, the responses of others, and expectations of future responses. Strategic interaction is crucially important, the very stuff of protest, but if it is the only lens, then "conflict" replaces "social movements" as the appropriate framework. A purely strategic lens misses much of the "why" of protest.

The logic of strategic interaction, explored in more depth in chapter 13, has two main components. One is the explanation of strategic choices: why players make the decisions they do, how they think about opponents and other audiences. A hefty biographical component affects these choices. So do tastes in tactics, judgments that are partly independent of expected outcomes. The other part of strategy is more structural: people respond to the actions of others in ways that are partly predictable, so that many conflicts follow the same patterns. Outcomes such as polarization, radicalization, and stalemate—as game theorists love to show—are not intended or desired by any of the players. Through the logic of conflict, players can lose much of their own room to maneuver, finding themselves in traps. Some traps are carefully laid by opponents, but others arise out of strategic interaction, much to the surprise of all involved—and sometimes to the disadvantage of all sides. Political opportunities can disappear not only— as process theorists emphasize—because of state decisions but also through a logic of strategic conflict operating behind everyone's back. Strategy involves both individual choices and interactions among many such choices.

Granting autonomy to strategy allows us to appreciate resources more fully, retaining the crisp definition of them as physical technologies and capacities as well as the money to buy them. The zero-sum nature of resources—their countability and transferability, according to Gamson and his colleagues—distinguishes them from many other

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kinds of advantages protestors seek. Strategies and resources are intimately related, of course: through strategies one accumulates resources, so that the kind and amount of resources a protest group has at any time is a function of prior strategies; and resources are only significant when they are used as part of some broader strategic initiative (even if that strategy only involves the *threatened* use of resources). But the relationship between them varies. Citizenship movements may mobilize their "natural" constituencies with different strategies than post-citizenship movements will use. The two kinds of movements may also differ in their relationship to those outside the movement, in that some group is benefiting, in all likelihood, from the exclusionary practices that citizenship movements are protesting against; thus repression may be quicker and more severe. As a form of property, resources are hemmed in by an extensive web of laws and customs that both restrict access and constrain how resources can be used. Acquiring a physical resource is only the first step towards its application.

In chapter 2, when discussing the overextension of the concept of resource, we saw that cultural meanings and practices operate with a different logic from that of physical resources—even though culture relies on physical embodiments and resources depend on cultural knowledge. Analytically, it is useful not to think of culture or biography as a form of resource.

Resources and strategies differ in their measurability. Strategic choices and programs can be either mistaken or effective. A conclusive judgment about this is possible only in retrospect, for a clever move or reinterpretation can often make a good situation out of a bad one, just as a bad blunder can blow what had seemed an invincible lead. Yet along the way, strategic advantages are real enough, and sudden reversals infrequent enough, for observers to make provisional judgments of who is ahead. Resources are more easily counted and compared, even though spurts of accumulation are also possible with clever strategic action. In any case, advantages in strategic position and resources are more easily assessed, even measured, than cultural and biographical advantages.

Power ultimately rests on resources. Those with more money get their way most of the time. Resources help protect against unexpected attacks, and allow a greater variety and more constant application of strategies. But success is not always determined by power or resources alone. Much protest has been about those with less power winning concessions from those with more—for strategic, cultural, and biographical reasons.

Resources and strategies have been well studied, but a full under-

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standing of either one requires greater attention to culture and biography. Culture helps define the uses of resources and the options available as strategies. Biographical dynamics help to explain the choices made.

Culture

My preliminary definition of culture as shared mental equipment and its representations was designed mostly to show how it differed analytically from resources, strategies, and biography. I further insisted on culture's own analytically separable components: cognition, morality, and emotions. We can now make an additional cut into culture, distinguishing different ways it is related to thought and action, and different places to look for it methodologically. Just as debates between different theoretical traditions often collapsed the four distinct dimensions of protest, so disagreements concerning the nature of culture often overlook the fact that it is several things. Arguments unfold over whether culture is subjective or objective, individual or collective, Weberian or Durkheimian, creative or constraining, constitutive or a product, structuring or structured. And just as I have argued for a "both/ and" rather than an "either-or" view of protest's dimensions, I'll argue that culture can be observed in many places and ways. Rather than being either individual or collective, for example, it is both.

If we don't distinguish its facets, however, culture can hide more than it reveals. Gary Alan Fine has pointed out the potential vagueness of culture when studied as "an amorphous, indescribable mist which swirls around society's members," the problems being due to "difficulties associated with specifying its content and the population serving as its referent." [4] I suggest that we avoid speaking of "a culture," as though there were a primordial, unitary set of feelings or understandings shared by all or most members of a society. (There may be, in some cases, but it is better not to assume it.) I prefer to speak of separate cultural beliefs, feelings, rituals, symbols, practices, moral visions, and such. How widely shared any of them is should be an empirical question—the answer to which often explains the success or failure of a protest movement. The unitary view of culture is the legacy of older anthropological traditions, French structuralism, parsonian sociology, and marxist analyses of class hegemony. An individual may have a complex, interrelated worldview; a society cannot.[5]

I would distinguish culture along two major dimensions, each of which is correlated with several minor distinctions. First, culture runs the gamut *from implicit to explicit.*[6] The most obvious form of culture

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consists of explicit chunks, such as ideas, legal identities, moral principles, named emotions, language, as well as the artifacts which express these. But we also operate with metaphors, customs, sensibilities, and assumptions that we cannot fully articulate. As social scientists we try to make all the components explicit (just as many protestors try to do, deriving explicit ideologies from inchoate sensibilities), but most practitioners (real people, that is) are happy to operate with a lot of intuitive common sense. We may have a moral intuition that something is wrong or right without being able to name the principle at stake. It is usually only implicitly that culture helps to define resources and strategies, for instance.

A closely related dimension divides culture into *discrete pieces,* more easily made explicit, versus *bundles or packages* of those components, which are more likely to remain implicit. Discrete ideas and moral values can be packaged together into a worldview or ideology. For example, emotions such as anger or outrage and cognitions such as attributions of blame together form an injustice frame. A related distinction is that culture can be analyzed as a static classification of meanings (usually explicit) or as something that is only visible in action (and hence implicit). This is what philosophers since Wittgenstein have called *knowing that versus knowing how.* We know how to behave at a rally even if we don't have Erving Goffman's ability to formulate the rules we are following. We may have emotions and knowledge that we lack the language to articulate.

The second major cluster of contrasts is between culture as *individual and interior* on the one hand, versus *shared, public, and collective* on the other—"thought in the head, thought in the world," as Clifford Geertz once put it. [7] A commonsense and traditional way to think about culture views it as the intentions, beliefs, values, and such of individuals which motivate, guide, or rationalize their actions. Because of notorious empirical difficulties in linking mental states to actions, many social scientists prefer to define culture exclusively as public statements and artifacts. Only individuals have thoughts, but they express them in media that make them available to others, art being the paradigm case. Symbols can then be studied as structured systems of boundaries and differences with little reference to the subjective state of individuals, allowing students of culture to avoid the thorny problem of trying to probe other people's minds. These theorists hope in this way to sidestep issues of meaning and interpretation. This strategy, according to Eric Rambo and Elaine Chan, "divides culture into text and meaning, establishing text as a universally objective domain of cultural structure, and thereby protecting part of culture from the problem of mean-

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ing, protecting the study of culture, that is, from the problem of studying a 'phenomenon' that is at the same time interior and collective." [8] This effort ultimately fails, for objective texts still mean something to individuals, shape their ideas and feelings, move them in certain ways.

To me *culture is a duality,* observable either through interviews with individuals or through analysis of public embodiments, with varying kinds of correspondence between the two. Culture links individuals with institutionalized symbols by providing meanings that we can discern both in the consciousness of individuals—the ideas they espouse, the assumptions they reveal in interviews—and in the formal, public events, artifacts, and documents of society. In addition to its public embodiments, in other words, culture is also something that we carry around in our heads. Cultural symbols have meanings (as parts of structures) and they have meaning (for individuals). Culture consists of knowledge, process, and product, as thoughts lead to activities, which create objects. This duality is characteristic of all structures, as Anthony Giddens points out in saying they are "both medium and outcome" of social practices, both structured and structuring.[9] Because of this duality, we can get at culture methodologically either through interviews with individuals or through physical documents and images. Often we can uncover the same meanings from both directions, although we sometimes see variation in how individuals think and feel about the public symbols. Public statements and rituals are compatible with private allegiance, complete cynicism, or many stances in between.

The contrast between public and private is intimately connected to another contrast: culture's *static versus its dynamic face.* As publicly observable artifacts and statements, which together form a discernible structure of meanings with some autonomy from those who use it, culture discourages individual innovation. We cannot say whatever we please or believe whatever we wish and still hope to be understood. Mary Douglas argues, "Culture, in the sense of the public, standardised values of a community, mediates the experience of individuals. It provides in advance some basic categories, a positive pattern in which ideas and values are tidily ordered. And above all, it has authority, since each is induced to assent because of the assent of others. But its public character makes its categories more rigid." We must bend to the cultural structures around us.[10] Yet only partly. We can twist and transform those structures because there is also a subjective and strategic moment to culture. Culture is a set of rules we can use according to our own intentions. We work within certain aspects of the structure to subvert other aspects of it.

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Pierre Bourdieu demonstrates how the two sides of culture are inextricably related. He describes culture as a set of available strategies, and likens a cultural product, in his example a marriage, "to a card game, in which the outcome depends partly on the deal, the cards held (their value itself being defined by the rules of the game, characteristic of the social formation in question), and partly on the players' skill." [11] In my terms, there is an initial distribution of resources, followed by the strategic interactions which change that distribution. Culture defines the game and the value of resources, offers discrete moves and skills used in playing it, and still allows room for innovations. The rules, for Bourdieu, are only guidelines, and he criticizes other traditions for reducing people to the role of simply executing or applying fixed rules.[12] Bourdieu's picture contains some structure, but also allows some discretion and creativity. A marriage is a (potentially virtuosic) cultural performance. *There are no fixed rules about when it's best to break the rules*. Because of the duality of culture and other structures, there is room for artistry in social life, especially in protest.

In the similar words of Ann Swidler, "A culture is not a unified system that pushes action in a consistent direction. Rather, it is more like a 'tool kit' or repertoire from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action."[13] Swidler wishes to avoid both subjective and objective concepts of culture by showing how "social processes organize and focus culture's effects on action." She draws on Theodore Caplow's analysis of Christmas gift giving, in which people continue to give gifts, even though they dislike the custom and don't believe it has any meaning, because they believe that it has meaning for others. Swidler concludes, "What governs action in this case, then, is not individuals' internalized beliefs, but their knowledge of what meanings their actions have for others."[14] Yet subjective assessments still matter—in fact there are two layers of meanings: *our* perceptions about *other* people's subjective meanings (and feelings and judgments). Our actions do not simply embody our intentions; they include a strategic element of mutual expectations about other people's responses. It is not clear that Swidler has eliminated the subjective or the objective aspects; rather, she has shown how they interact. Besides, even if culture sometimes operates through mistaken impressions of other's meanings, this does not mean that it never works as internal subjective intentions or as structured, objective constraints.

Swidler addresses another distinction among forms of culture: as goals for action, and as means of attaining them. Attacking parsonian images, she is concerned to show that ultimate ends and values do not guide action. She conceptualizes culture, then, as a repertory of ways

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of acting, related not only to habits but to skills. Culture becomes a form of strategy. [15] Culture, I would agree, includes models and schemas for action: knowledge that can be put into practice. But why exclude ends as another component of culture? Do humans not have goals, at least some of the time? And if they do, where would they come from but the world of culture, the beliefs, aspirations, and moral visions that we share with others?

Cultural meanings and feelings can be either explicit or implicit; they can be more like means or more like ends. They are publicly embodied yet also lodge in individuals' heads—where they intersect with the realm of biography. I prefer not to exclude any kind of culture that clearly exists and affects action, just so that we can fit it all into a single concept. Narrow conceptual definitions are good, but we may need several of them to cover culture. My hope in the rest of the book is to tease out meanings that are implicit as well as explicit, and to get at them, when possible, through both individuals and public embodiments. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "[W]e are symbols, and inhabit symbols." We use culture to constitute ourselves and our worlds; it both constrains and enables us.

It should be clear how intimately culture shapes resources and strategies. We learn how to use resources and to make strategic choices from others and from our own experiences, with a kind of residue that lodges in our minds. Strategizing, in particular, is a matter of sometimes following culturally ingrained rules but at other times bending them, breaking them, playing off them to thwart expectations. As Swidler showed, strategies put culture into action. Contrary to Swidler's argument, culture also provides the goals that we strategize for, the reasons we accumulate resources. On top of this, we shall later see, we attach moral and emotional values to strategies, above and beyond valuing them for their sheer efficacy.

That meanings, feelings, even resources and strategies are "culturally constructed" does not mean that they are arbitrary or infinitely flexible. Socially constructed meanings and practices can exert considerable constraint or provide equal room for creativity. The great story of the human sciences for at least forty years has been the recognition of just how completely everything humans know about the world, everything they do, even all that scientists (both social and natural) do, is socially constructed. That is, all our physical and mental tools are cultural conventions that work in part because people in a group or society agree upon them. Our very perceptions of the external world and of our interior selves are guided by expectations and categories shaped by those around us; we have no direct access to either. The

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tools and visions thus constructed are culture. Cognitively, emotionally, and morally, we are all deeply embedded in cultural contexts, even defined by them. Concepts such as political opportunity structures, resources, and rationality are not just interpreted through a cultural lens, but are constituted and defined from the start by cultural contexts.

Social constructionism avoids both traditional objectivism—the idea that we can come to understand and grasp "the world" out there in a fairly direct way—as well as utter relativism—the idea that different conceptual systems so constrain our ability to grasp the world that we cannot compare these systems with each other, that our frameworks trap us in different worlds. Once we admit, with the constructionists, that we cannot know with certainty the relationship between our beliefs about the external world and the true state of that world (we suspect that modern science is a pretty accurate picture of nature, but we cannot prove it with certainty), then we can look for the social mechanisms that help sort out better and worse opinions. We can examine the "sifting" function of scientific journals, peer reviews, data gathering, conventions for sampling and statistical analysis, hypotheses and predictions—all of which are ways of judging the validity of claims about reality. We can also judge malfunctions in those "validity mechanisms," as when the prestige of the investigator influences her argument's chance of acceptance, when the interests of the biotechnology industry influence scientific research funding, when political pressures close down laboratories. [16]

Even if emotions, morals, and scientific facts are socially constructed, even if they are not "objectively" out there, independent of human observers, at least in any form that humans can access directly, this does not mean that they are a subjective matter of individual choice. Culture is structured and constraining. I cannot believe just anything I wish. I may say that my cocker spaniel influences the daily vicissitudes of the NASDAQ exchange, but I cannot force even myself to believe it—much less persuade my friends. This claim is a biographical quirk, not a cultural achievement. If I truly come to believe it, rejecting culturally accepted evidence and arguments in discussions with my friends, then I will be dismissed as insane (even though no one else has a better account of NASDAQ prices). Even in small groups or pairs we cannot "negotiate" just any emotion or belief. There are constraints imposed by the distribution of power in society, by organizations with interests in constructing certain emotions, by acceptable kinds of "evidence" filtered from the external world, and by a variety of other institutional and cultural practices. For every environmental

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